



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

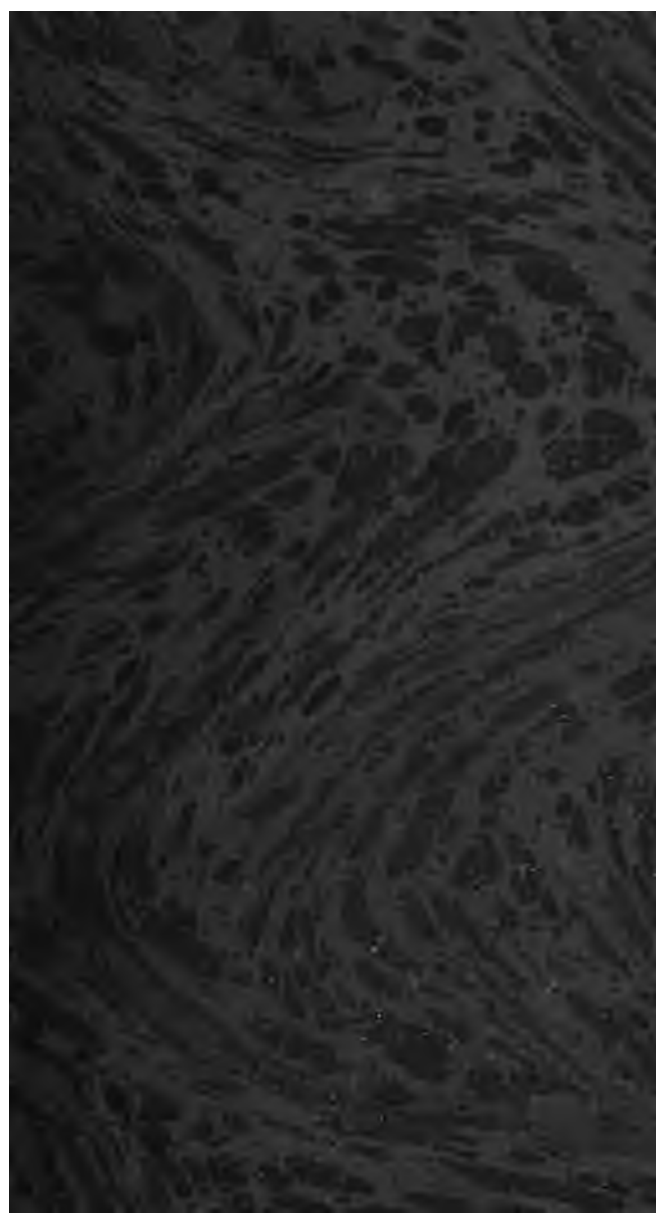
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>







Bought from B.H. Blackwell 812/195.

20
2006

2006

100

60

2471143

f.

13
1



LETTERS
OF A
MAMELUKE;
OR A
MORAL AND CRITICAL PICTURE
OF THE
MANNERS OF PARIS.

WITH NOTES BY THE TRANSLATOR.

FROM THE FRENCH OF
JOSEPH LAVALLEE,
OF THE PHILOTECHNIC SOCIETY, &c. &c. &c.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR JOHN MURRAY, 32, FLEET-STREET;
AND JOHN HARDING, 36, ST. JAMES'S-STREET.

1804.



Printed by B. M'Millan, }
***Bow-Street, Covent-Garden.* }**

P R E F A C E.

IT is not to the pleasure, always frivolous enough, in my opinion, to be found in censuring absurdities, that this Work must be imputed. The simple desire to point out the inconveniences, and even the dangers, which some habits, customs, and fashions, may introduce in their suite, has alone emboldened me to give it to the Public. I aspire not to correct; I am far from abandoning myself to so pitiful a vanity; and if, unfortunately, the illusions of that vanity had for a moment bewildered my imagination, I dare be-

lieve that reason would have had sufficient empire over me, to enlighten me in regard to the weakness of my means, and to remind me that the part of reformer is pardonable only in men of superior talent.

Being an observer by inclination, by character perhaps, the habit of incessantly studying the moveable picture of society has led me to some results which I have taken for truths. But are they really truths? To the judgment of those who shall waste a few moments in perusing this Book, I submit my observations and reflections. I have thought neither contemptible, since I publish them; but I shall not make them a misplaced apology, nor undertake their defence against those
who

who may refute them. It is not through modesty or pride that I express myself in this manner. No man writes, or ought to write, without proposing to himself an object of utility : woe be to the writer who is not animated by such a spirit ! But, in general, man is so easily the dupe of his manner of considering objects, his opinion is composed of so many exterior elements, his judgment is so often no more than the effect of an impulse, the power of which he does not perceive, that he would be really a madman to affirm that he has seen with his own eyes, and to maintain that he has seen clearly. The intention of good is, after that, the only property to which his claims are authentic, and the only

one too, of which he ought to be proud. It is therefore for the intention alone that I crave indulgence. I dare flatter myself that there is not one of these Letters in which that intention is not obvious. I give up to censure, without recrimination, the errors of my mind: I hope for favour only for the uprightness of my sentiments.

When Letters are intended to treat of various subjects, and when they are, consequently, independent of each other, the only order indispensable to be followed, is that which is commanded by the suitableness of time. It is natural to think that this Mameluke, on arriving at Paris, was likely to be wholly a stranger to our manners: a thousand objects, entirely new to him, will

will have struck his eye. This unforeseen shock will have necessarily thrown some confusion into his first ideas ; and judging at first with a little ill humour, he will have expressed his first sensations with a sort of harshness. He will evidently have required some time to inform himself, to know, to compare, to educate himself, if I may use the expression ; to be able, in short, to appreciate the virtues of a nation, whose exterior and whose oddities only he will have seen on his arrival. From that time it will be acknowledged that intervals of a certain length must have elapsed between some of his Letters, especially at the beginning of the Work ; but, in proportion as his knowledge shall have increased, his correspondence

spondence will have assumed a character more marked ; and the more he shall have naturalized himself among us, the more he shall, as it were, have assimilated himself to a Frenchman, the more rectitude, vigour, dignity, or gaiety, the tone, the colouring, and the logic of his Letters, will have contracted, according to the subjects.

Such is the only order to which I have thought it my duty to subject myself. It has seemed to me that, with a view of preserving probability, I ought in the outset to abandon this Mameluke only to his natural turn of mind, to his rather forward inclination for criticism, to that disposition rather general in all men, to blame at first, what they see in foreign countries.

I have

I have thought that it was proper to shew the progressive increase of his knowledge ; that I ought to give him, by degrees, a sort of footing, if I may so term it, and imperceptibly implant more clearness in his ideas, more maturity in his reasoning, and less prepossession in his decisions.

As for the arrangement of the subjects, I have been of opinion, that a work of this kind could not, nor ought not to require any ; that it was even necessary, as much as possible, to avoid uniformity ; that Letters ought to bear no resemblance to Chapters ; and that the man who gives to a friend, from whom he is separated by a great distance, an account of the sensations he experiences at the sight
of

of the objects which fall in his way, ought to speak of them as chance presented them to his observation. For the same reason I was authorized to suppose that, if Paris was a sight equally new and extraordinary to a Mameluke, he was likely, nevertheless, to have had a preliminary knowledge of the character of the French ; and I have no occasion, methinks, to call to mind, that the glory of my country dispenses me from saying how and why a Mameluke may have known the French before he came to France.

“ Do not make Brutus a fop, nor Cato a lady’s beaux,” has said the severe legislator of our literary republic. And, according to this law, all the propriety of which I feel, the reader will

will be justified in reproaching me with having given to this Mameluke a turn of mind with which his education, the climate that gave him birth, and the prejudices that he imbibed in his own country, ought certainly not to have inspired him. I confess that I have no very valid excuse to oppose to this reproach, and, in acknowledging this fault, I will freely admit that I have not always examined whether I have made him reason like a Mameluke, and that I have, more frequently, endeavoured only to make him reason like a man. But I am concerning myself about this fault, while there are, perhaps, others far more important in the whole of the Work.



LETTERS
OF
A MAMELUKE.

LETTER I.

GIESID, A MAMELUKE, TO HIS FRIEND,
GIAFAR.

O GIAFAR, I promised, before my departure, to write to thee ; but every thing I see here is so new to me, all objects still present themselves so confusedly to my imagination, all the people by whom I am surrounded are so strange, so restless, so volatile; that I am at a loss how to begin.

Here we are in Paris. The French

VOL. I.

B

call

2 LETTERS OF A MAMELUKE.

call this a city. For my part, on reaching it, I thought I was entering into a vast quarry. The houses rise in such a manner into the clouds, one might almost say that the height of this city is equal to its superficies; the distance between the inhabitant of the ground-floor and that of the attic story is so great, they cannot have a communication with each other without resolving to undertake a journey; and so many different nations occupy the stories which separate them, it would, perhaps, be prudent to take a passport before one should ascend a stair-case.

They affirm that their Paris is ten leagues in circumference; and as their houses consist mostly of seven stories, here are, as thou seest, seven cities of ten leagues in circuit, placed the one above the other. But as all the inhabitants of these seven cities are necessarily

sarily obliged to go down into the streets for their affairs, and as the difference in this respect is seven to one, thou wilt easily conceive what noise, what confusion, what embarrassment is incessantly occasioned here by the crowd. The French do not walk; they run. For my part, I think that the streets were made so narrow only to correct them of this fault; but in vain. Horses, carts, coaches, cabriolets, butchers, water-carriers, hussars, pedestrians, all run, all drive on as hard as they can; they jostle, push, and run foul of each other; they threaten and upset one another, rise again, and go on as if nothing had happened. Here asses alone walk slowly; not but, from time to time, the whip is employed to make them adopt the fashion: yet all to no purpose, they proceed not the quicker: in all countries asses are headstrong.

In Paris, the stories of the houses are, in general, a tolerably exact indication of the different conditions of society. Shop-keepers occupy the lower part ; rich people, the first floor ; persons in easy circumstances, the second ; people in office, the third ; working men, the fourth ; and the distressed part of the community, the higher stories. I know not whether a philosopher presided at this division, but every house in Paris presents an allegory, somewhat striking, of the metamorphoses which families commonly experience here in the course of a few generations. The grandfather begins the fortune of his race by industry, commerce, labour, &c. This is the inhabitant of the ground-floor. His sons give themselves up to idleness, luxury, and extravagance ; thus is occupied the first floor. The grandsons have the same inclinations, and less means ;

means ; they are no more than easy in point of circumstances, but wish to appear rich, and the rest of the fortune is dissipated ; thus the second. Their children, without inheritance, are obliged to sell to others their time, their services, and their talents ; they live without laying by any thing, and die without leaving any thing ; thus the third. Their successors, without patrimony, and frequently without genius, rely for their existence on their physical strength ; they become working men ; thus the fourth. Their sons, from their infancy, abandoned to themselves, without resources, without education, without knowledge, and consequently without energy and courage, vegetate in poverty, and perish in misery ; and thus the fifth. When it pleases Nature to endow with some intelligence an inhabitant of the sixth story, he descends again to the ground-

floor, and makes his race begin once more to climb the steps of the ladder. If man deigned to pay attention to it, the arrangement of a house in Paris would afford him a good lesson. He would see that, without labour, he is the victim of luxury, idleness, prodigality, slavery, sensuality, indigence, and ignorance.

Thou wilt make some difficulty to believe what I am going to state. In this enormous multitude of houses, if you have business with a person of whose address you are ignorant, it is easier to succeed in discovering that of the poor man than that of the rich one. If it is the poor man you are looking for, and, by chance, you should meet with any one who knows him, no difficulty occurs; he tells you the part of the town, the street, the house: you go, you arrive, you find him, and no more is to be said. But if it is a rich

rich man that you wish to see, all those of whom you inquire after him will call themselves his friends: he lives there, one will say; no, it is elsewhere, another will say: it is in such a street, on such a quay, at such a gate. And, in this manner, Paris becomes to you a perfect labyrinth. Remark that they have, perhaps, never seen the man in question; but their memory is a tablet on which pride and deceit engrave the name of a rich man; some make use of it on occasion, in order to usurp your consideration; and others, your confidence. The name of a man of consequence is a negotiable article for intriguers; the great art consists in carrying it opportunely to market. At length you meet with some person who says to you: "You are looking for such a one? He has a house in such a part of the town." You fly thither, you in-

quire.

quire for him : he is not known. “ But
“ I was told that this was his house.”
“ —True, it is so ; but he does not live
“ in it.” In this manner you go to
half a dozen houses : they all belong to
him ; but you find him not in any one
of them. This custom at first appeared
to me very singular : ten or twelve
houses for a single individual ! Let
him do what he will, however, he can
at most inhabit but one room. “ What
“ purpose can it answer,” said I to a
Frenchman whose friendship I had
gained, “ to have so many houses, to
“ leave them empty ? ” — “ How, emp-
“ ty ? ” — “ Undoubtedly, since the
“ owner can be but in one.” — “ What
“ signifies that ? they are all inhabited
“ from the cellar to the garret.” —
“ Ah ! I understand ; he gives a lodg-
“ ing in them to his relations.” — “ Do
“ you think so ? His relations are
“ richer than he. Oh ! no ; he is
“ much

“ much more prudent than that.”—
“ Ah! I beg a thousand pardons;
“ being a foreigner, I am little ac-
“ quainted with your manners, but I
“ now comprehend you; he has a
“ great many houses, for the pur-
“ pose of lodging a great many un-
“ fortunate persons.” — “ Unfortu-
“ nate persons! zounds! what unfor-
“ tunate persons? There is not a
“ single family that does not pay him
“ at least a thousand crowns a year for
“ living in one of his houses.” O Gia-
far! I remained stupefied. They have,
as thou wilt perceive, put up to auction
the most sacred of virtues; they have
let out hospitality to hire! And they
ridicule the Arabs!

LETTER II.

THE first time I appeared in the street, they ran up to me, they crowded together, they surrounded me: " 'Tis " the Mameluke! There's the Mameluke! Look at the Mameluke!" I listened attentively: I heard not a single one say: "He's a man." I was ashamed, not of myself; but this was troublesome to me. I thought that their curiosity would pursue me for a long time, and I wished to return within doors. I was but little acquainted with them! A large drum, like a *tam-tam*, was heard; the crowd left me, and ran twenty paces farther. What was it? A fellow with some dancing dogs. I heard them say: "There are the dogs! Look at the "dogs!" just as they had said: "There's " the Mameluke!"

If

If the men here are a little mad, the conduct of the women is not always perfectly consistent with reason; but they are pretty, and the rattle of Momus detracts not from the Graces. The evening before my arrival, they were all dressed in the fashion which existed three thousand years ago: the streets were filled with Zenobias, Cleopatras, Sapphos, and Cornelias. Every milliner would have entered the lists against Caylus and Montfaucon. I arrive: suddenly they are habited in the style of a Mameluke, and the libraries can no longer furnish a copy of Norden or Volney. But, as these ladies have never seen Mameluke women, and as I am the doll that serves them as a pattern for this new folly, they are all, without thinking of it, clad in man's attire.

The great prophet had most certainly indulged in too large a libation
 B 6 of

of *schiras* when he cast my fortune. Who would have told me, when I was reposing quietly by thy side, on those banks which the Nile waters with its fertilizing stream, that one day I should be transported a thousand leagues from thee, that my turban would adorn the head of all the *odalisks* of Paris, and that I should become the subject of a species of ballad; which is here called a *vaudeville*? Thou knowest not what is a *vaudeville*, and, as thou hast no idea of their theatres, thou wilt find it difficult to comprehend me. I will some day make you acquainted with these theatres. In the mean time, know that a *vaudeville* is a species of miniature in crayons, the colours of which frequently last but a day; a month of existence is its eternity. All the personages of these little pictures are in motion: they go, come, enter, and make their exit; and all this, pretty

pretty often, without knowing well for what reason. Canvas, painted and cut out, forms the landscape; sometimes it consists of woods; sometimes, of gardens, palaces, chambers, or cottages; and as the painters of these pictures have not, apparently, a very accurate knowledge of perspective, it happens now and then that the personages are taller than the houses, which is not the least comical part of the spectacle. This little magic lantern is lighted by lamps. The figures of these pictures change not only every day, but also three or four times in an evening. They sing all they utter. Sad or merry, wise or foolish, old or young, their wit, their grief, and their gaiety, are expressed in a song. Sometimes these figures represent their great men, sometimes those whom they wish to turn into ridicule. They make Voltaire, Malesherbes, and Patru, sing; I should

should not wonder if one of these days they put a song into the mouth of Massillon, Pascal, and Montesquieu. Their turn will come, and mine is passed; for, as well as Racine and the elephants, I have received a little homage from the little theatre of Vaudeville. Though I am but a poor Mameluke, who can scarcely pronounce two words of their language, they have made me speak French almost as well as themselves! Consequently, they have made me say what I never have said. As for their language, I shall soon learn it, I hope. I begin to read and understand it. I study it in reading their history, which is a curious one. I shall speak to you of it more than once.

LETTER

LETTER III.

THE French boast of being the most industrious nation on the face of the earth, and they are in the right. They talk of nothing but their industry, the progress of their industry, and the fruits of their industry. Well! If a place, even an indifferent one, is to be given away, what a noise! You would think that they have no resource to procure an existence. Who will be appointed? Who is appointed? Is it you? Is it me? Is it he? Such are the conversations, the habitual questions. I have no conception of what this means: is it that, among them, places also constitute a part of their industry?

In general, the French are a singular people: since I have examined them, I perceive that, for them, to
hope

hope is to enjoy. They never say, I am well off, but I shall be well off. "Why do you deprive yourself of such a pleasure, such an occupation, such a society?" inquired I, the other day, of one of their devotees. "It is because I wish to be happy after my death," replied he. Question one of their unbelievers, and ask him why he consents not to any privations? He will answer: "It is because I wish to be happy before my death." What dost thou think of this? To hope to be happy before or after death, is not the madness the same? For them the future is always a fairy palace: when they have reached it, this palace becomes a hut in ruins. For the French, night is not the time of dreams, it is the day. If you laugh at this madness, they will tell you that hope is a happiness. Very well; but it is the happiness of the wretched.

Yet,

Yet, indeed, they are the people of all others for projects; and projects are the eldest sons of hope. They all here make incursions into posterity, much as our Arabs do into the desert. The latter meet with caravans, and plunder them. The caravans which the French plunder, are the projects of their fellow-creatures; they run against them, upset them, disperse them, and even enrich themselves now and then with their spoils, till other persons serve them in the same manner. This is the reason why among them, out of twenty projects which they conceive, scarcely is one successful.

This truth is written on all their monuments; they bespeak an air of grandeur, but few of them are completed. Dost thou know why? It is because a hope of another kind caused the work to be interrupted; and as their hopes, through an original whimsicality,

sicality, always assume the shade of the objects present, which ought to be the case however, it happens that the fashion, or circumstances, or time, effacing these objects in order to substitute new ones in their place, hopes of the same kind never present themselves again to their imagination, and nothing, consequently, leads them back to a work interrupted, and determines them to finish it.

They are fond of the word IMMORTALITY. This is as it should be : the vague and indefinite idea to which it gives birth may very well be applied to their inclination in regard to hope. If they shew you one of their palaces, one of their porticoes, they say to you, "Admire ! that is immortal." Look at the other side, and you frequently find a heap of ruins. What wouldst thou say, Giafar, of a madman who should engrave the word IMMORTALITY
ON

on the marble of a tomb? Thou wouldst lift up the stone, wouldst thou not? and thou wouldst say to him: "Look."

The more I see of the French, the more they astonish me. When you live with them, you are forced to love them; but sometimes you ask yourself for what reason you love them. They are graceful, affable, and engaging: accost them, they caress you; quit them, they forget you. So much the better, perhaps; for to be the favourite friend of a Frenchman, you must every day make acquaintance with him. Are they good or bad? This is a problem; neither perhaps. Their friendship is a phosphoric flash; their hatred, an epigram. Gay, playful, volatile, to an excess, they always do the contrary of what they say. They accommodate themselves to every thing,
and

and are never contented with any thing: laughter and lamentation are to them synonymous. As their chagrin is void of gravity, their consolation is destitute of eloquence: they expend their sorrows like their riches, without thinking of to-morrow.

In a Frenchman, two men are always to be found; the man speaking and the man acting; and these two men never consult each other. The spokesman often betrays sensibility; the actor, very seldom. The spokesman will spend six months in composing a treatise on beneficence; and the actor will every day meet an unfortunate man without looking at him. The spokesman and the actor are, however, the same being. The sensibility of many of the French has a logic of a most particular species: they seem as if they said: *I am affected; let others administer relief.*

I was

I was walking with a Frenchman, when a poor man implored his pity; he gave to him some small change. "Poor unfortunate creature," said he to me, "how I feel for him! he is dying with hunger." A hundred paces further on, a man alighted from a magnificent carriage. He accosted my Frenchman, and also begged of him. The Frenchman eagerly put his hand into his pocket, and gave him twenty-five pieces of gold. When we were alone: "What a happy fellow!" said he to me, "an immense fortune, every thing that he can wish for; he would buy Paris."—"You are not in your right senses," answered I; "it was to the poor man that you ought to have given the pieces of gold, and the small change to the rich one." He burst out a laughing, and said to me: "Hold thy tongue, thou

22 LETTERS OF A MAMELUKE.

“ thou dost not understand me, Ma-
“ meluke.”

“ So much the better for me,” said
I to myself in a whisper. Good-night,
Giafar.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

SPRING opens. How whimsical are the French! By their account, they draw near to the end of the season of pleasures. The end of pleasures! And Nature is awakened.

Among them, pleasure is a word; amusement, a project; joy, an agitation; enjoyment, a change; and dissipation, their sole object.

Since their language is become familiar to me, I have read their history, and now I know it. For fifteen hundred years past, this has been the most fertile of all nations in great men of every description. Yet, such is the frivolity of a Frenchman, that he seems to have no other care than to banish the recollection that he is a man: thou wouldst imagine that, in length of time, there will thus be a total decline. This
is

is an error : destiny is more powerful than fashion, and things will go on as they have done.

This nation presents a very singular historical phenomenon, which neither is seen, nor even suspected. It has struck me so forcibly, it is so evidently demonstrated to my understanding, that I shall, in the sequel, make it the subject of a particular letter. At present, I shall content myself with pointing it out to thee.

In this country, the native inhabitants were called GAULS : their origin of the most remote antiquity. Who knows it? No one. It is fifteen centuries since a conquering people came and incorporated themselves with them ; they called themselves FRANCS. They possessed the same bravery, but not the same manners. It is imagined that they have been mixed, that every shade of distinction has disappeared. This is
no

not the case: like two rivers, they have flowed in the same bed, for ages, without mixing. During twelve years which they have just employed in their modern revolution, a thousand events appear to them an enigma. They are blind: let them look, the solution is there: the **FRANCS**, always rough, always untamed, always licentious: the **GAULS**, always frivolous, always inconstant, always superstitious; and both, always terrible in war. There lies the whole mystery.

What then will succeed in mixing them? That which has not existed for fifteen hundred years, institutions capable of softening the one, and of fixing the other. The mixture has never taken place; and I shall explain to thee the reason.

But, thou wilt say, their monarchy has lasted so long: this is true; but,

for the character of nations to be effaced, it is not sufficient that a man holds in his hands the government of twenty states, or as many more. All drag the car; but the one champs the bit: the other bears with it. The Spaniards are not become Germans from having been governed by Charles the Fifth. The Franks must have liberty; the Gauls must have gods: give gods to the one, a reasonable liberty to the other, and agriculture to both. It is the bond of all mankind. In order to incorporate nations, a single ear of corn does more than laws. Labour, there is the principle; plenty, there is the policy; happiness, there is the alliance. Knowledge and arts will do the rest; and the future will be the ocean in which will disappear forever the tinge of the two rivers.

This mixture is begun, but only
since

since the revolution, and some day I will prove it to thee ; but the shade is still visible. If commotion is the question, come the Franks ; if public games, shows, fashions, fickleness, levity, it is the Gauls : if heroism, both.

The French resemble not other men. Surround a Frenchman with what he calls the sweets, the charms, the luxury of life, he will almost always be but an ordinary being. Encompass him with obstacles, let him experience contrariety, let him once know adversity, it seldom happens that he becomes not a great character. How many nations have perished because they were proud only in misfortune, and ferocious in success ! The Frenchman alone knows how to be great in reverses as well as in triumphs : there is gold in his composition ; but the crucible must be employed.

Difficult to be governed as soon as

he is abandoned to his malicious character, he is subjugated by shows. And, indeed, it is well deserving of remark that, in all great political movements, the leaders of factions never leave the theatres open. There must be no plays represented, say they, when the country is in danger. Thou must not believe them; it is the interest of their standards that occupies them. They would soon be solitary, if the dramatic performances were not suspended. Shows! they are so greedy after them, particularly the lower classes of the people, that all satisfy them. What a mine to be explored, if it were wished to render them better! In this respect, men of *fashion*, to make use of an expression which is familiar to them, are of the same flesh and blood as the people themselves. This is allied to the national character. It is the *fashion* to run to the play-house every day, and the
fashion

fashion to find fault with all that is seen there. According to them, in the works of their living authors every thing is pitiful; and in those of the dead, every thing is sublime. Dost thou think that they reason thus through delicacy of taste? By no means: it is through a little empty pride which they bequeath to each other from father to son. Among a thousand of them, there would not be found, perhaps, a hundred capable of arranging a verse like the most indifferent of their literati: they are fully sensible of this incapacity; but they revenge themselves for it by a paltry, apparent disdain; and, in this respect, in order to disguise their nothingness, they pass sentence, right or wrong, on what they understand or do not understand, and incessantly feign to regret what they no longer possess, in order to induce the belief that they are good judges of what they

have. Thus, their grandfathers censured Corneille, Racine, and Moliere, at the same time regretting Durger and Tabarin ; thus their fathers hissed Crebillon, Voltaire, Regnard, and Des-touches, at the same time regretting Racine and Corneille ; thus those of the present day hiss such and such authors, at the same time regretting other illustrious ones who are no more ; and this will always be the case for ages and ages, if Frenchmen are still in being. All this is pitiful ; and but for their newspapers and reviews, they would correct themselves of the defect ; but the editors of those productions, in order to enhance their importance, take care to encourage in them this sort of propensity to unsound criticism. Thou knowest not what are their reviews ? I will inform thee at a future period : of all the institutions of Ignorance, they are certainly one of the most extraordinary :

ordinary: they are stones she has thrown on the road of Instruction, in order to retard its progress. However, as long as their petty literary opinions have no other character than their hereditary presumption, they are no more than visible; but when the spirit of party intervenes, which never fails to happen in revolutions, it is another affair; what was an absurdity only assumes a blackish hue: it is no longer the work on which they pass sentence, it is the political opinion: they are no longer censors; they deal out proscription. It no longer is taste concerning which they trouble themselves; it no longer is criticism with which they arm themselves; it is atrocious malice to which they give ear. Be the work good or bad, they are equally desirous of its failure, not simply to humble the author, but to reduce him to wretchedness, to snatch bread from his wife and

children, to commission hunger, thirst, and grief to dig a grave for a whole family. And think not that I exaggerate; I have seen what I represent. I have seen an old man whose talents had been held in esteem for twenty years; but whose political opinions had not accorded with those of some newspaper-writers. He brought out a piece not inferior to others which had come from his pen. They knew that his comfort depended on its success; they knew the fact, and combined to overwhelm him. They wished for his ruin: they paved the way to it by false taste, obtained it by cabals, and consummated it by outrage. The law condemns incendiaries: what less mischief is done by newspaper-writers of this stamp? Do they not burn harvests? The public content themselves with saying: they are malicious. A pretty punishment indeed! They would be very sorry not
to

to be malicious ; if they were not so, what would they be ?

In their rage for shows, the French are not always satisfied with being spectators, there are some in which they are all actors ; such is the carnivals for instance. There it is that their folly approaches madness. They clothe themselves in grotesque dresses ; the sexes interchange their apparel ; they represent parodies on mythology, religion, nations, public offices, professions, and even animals ; they cover themselves with a false face of wax or pasteboard, and then they are adrift. This festival lasts nearly a fortnight. Nothing is more singular than the extreme agitation of all these immoveable faces : all is action in men whose countenance has the inaction of death. This is no bad resemblance of a picture I have seen, called Holbein's Dance of Death. Stature, gait, gesture, ha-

bits, sound of voice, every thing is disguised. They muffle themselves up in all the liveries of dissimulation and deceit, in order to have, as they affirm, the right to say to each other reciprocally truths of every description; but what truths can issue from the mouth of a man whose great art consists in lying in regard to himself in the eyes of all those whom he accosts? Such truths are very like falsehoods. And, indeed, in these days of public delirium, the most able, the most triumphant, and above all, the most happy, is he whose keen tongue and indiscreet loquacity have inflicted most wounds. During these hours of public frenzy, the streets, the squares, the houses, the theatres, the balls, are so many fairs where people make a continual traffic of malignity, evil-speaking, calumny, and wickedness. When they have thus rubbed their reputations the one against the other,

other, when they have well bespattered and torn them, they think they have rendered a mighty service to society. It is much the same as if one should say to a volcano: what dost thou do there? And that it should answer, I am producing organization.

LETTER V.

LET us speak of their virtues. They have one which is not sufficiently remarked; nor is it esteemed according to its value; it is that, in general, they never do mischief with reflection. To understand me, observe that it seldom happens that the man inclined to do mischief with a premeditated intention, repairs it. The French are not wicked; they are only malicious.

The bee stings the hand indiscreetly extended to dispute with it the flower on which it reposes; but the balsam we apply to the wound is composed of the honey and wax which, a moment after, the inoffensive bee has produced in plenty. The hornet also stings; but what does it afford for a cure? Nothing. The Frenchman is the bee :

bee : many other nations resemble the hornet.

The French are a kind people ! I begin to be convinced of this. They, of course, possess many virtues ; for Kindness is the mother of the family. What a pity that systems and prejudices should sometimes paralyze them !

The French are excellent fathers in the order of nature ; they are detestable fathers in social order ; they have no satisfaction but in their children ; they cherish them, caress them, and embrace them continually ; they do not approach them but with an expression of affection in their countenance ; they do not quit them but with tears in their eyes. So far so good ; but every father here displays to the attention of his child in the cradle the list of his own whims, and says to him : “ there’s the itinerary of my life.”

What

What egotism here in paternal love!
 What presumption in paternal authority! What absurd theories in paternal education! Hear them reason; would one not imagine them to be fathers of the mind as well as of the body? Men without memory! they forget that the mind has no family!

Their moralists are incessantly repeating to them: Form the mind of your children. *Loquaces predicans.* What remains to be formed in that which was formed by God? Will a diamond shine the more if you cover it with a coat of clay? What a pity! Either be silent about your tenets, or keep your advice to yourself. Say not to your children: do this, do that; but do before them only what is proper, what is just, and what touches the heart: conduct yourself in this manner, not from the proud and empty pretension of forming their mind, but
 through

through respect for the presence of that divine emanation before which you act. When I mention to them these truths, Giafar, flighty as the birds of the air, they take wing, and leave me to my own meditations.

They have confidence in friendship; but do they believe in friends? I know not; seldom are two men seen here *tête-à-tête*; for dialogues on business are not, in my opinion, conversations of that description. A Frenchman often says: When shall I be rich, to enjoy the happiness of assembling my friends? Unhappy man! He therefore has none.

Besides, when they are rich, what do they call assembling their friends? Man is here a solitary being till five o'clock in the afternoon, or else he has been employed on objects very foreign to friendship. The clock strikes five: the gates of the hotel are thrown open,
and

and the noisy carriages drive into the court-yard. Three-fourths of these friends whom he assembles have never seen each other before; they think much less of him than of the new faces they perceive. The women pass each other in review, criticize each other with their eyes, and caress each other with their lips. The men examine and stare at each other, and are silent. Every one seeks an acquaintance in the crowd, in order not to find time hang heavy on his hands at the house of his friend. Dinner is served up: the company sit down to table; every thing is brilliant, every thing is splendid. Let them be frank, and ask them then what is the secret object of their warmest attachment: the man who invites his friends will answer: 'Tis my cook, my *maitre d'hôtel*, and the silversmith who furnished my plate, and the guest: 'Tis the diligent lackey who supplies me
with

with that delicious wine. Dinner being over, slander for an instant is passed round the circle in laconic phrases. Presently, *ennui*, yawning, comes and attaches wings to all these sylphs. They go away : they are gone ; and this is a day of French friendship. I have carefully examined their dinner-parties, Giafar, whatever was the number of these pretended friends, I never saw but two personages at table, pride and indifference.

Do not, however, consider them as destitute of sensibility. What they call custom and *bon ton* are to them tyrants which they must adore : the false opinion they have formed of the employment of riches requires that the man who possesses them should *receive company* : this is their expression. He is not ignorant that the vortex of fashion alone brings *this company* to his house : if he calls these men by the
name

name of friends, he is more to be pitied than blamed. He endeavours at least, by the falsehood of sentiment, to avoid the disgust of indifference ; and, if I may so express myself, to balance the account of the wants of his heart, he substitutes the coin of imagination to the treasures of sensibility.

They have a sort of tenaciousness in the attachments of their infancy or youth : they are glad to meet again with the companions of their studies, the comrades with whom they have served in the field, the men of their own age, whom circumstances, time, and place, associated to their destiny in the morning of their life. But that is not what may be strictly called friendship ; it is agreeable recollection. The sight of such persons retraces the pleasures they have relished ; it carries them back to their past enjoyments : it is through love for themselves that

they carefully cultivate their early connexions. Dost thou recollect, say they to them, what a handsome fellow I was at that time, that prize which I gained, those encomiums which I received from my masters, my skill in our youthful games, that battle in which I was conqueror, that woman of whose affections I became master? They seldom say to them : Dost thou remember our agreeable intimacy, our mutual confidence, our reciprocal services, the good which we practised together? When these men meet each other, Giafar, they never say we ; 'tis always I.

In listening to them, it should seem that they are very fond of celebrated men who are no more. Not at all : being gay by character, they are born for epigram. What difference do they make between a living man and a man in the grave? As long as a celebrated
man

man breathes, they criticize him aloud, and admire him in a whisper : when he is dead, they ridicule him in a whisper, and extol him aloud. Let us speak the truth : there is a sort of proud integrity in this conduct ; if their epigrams on their dead men resemble confidential communications, it is because they are generous enough to feel that those dead men can no longer answer nor defend themselves. They have, however, a sort of timidity in their little traits of malice ; it required time for me to divine why they always wish with so much ardour that statues should be erected to celebrated men when they are dead ; it is, because as long as they were living, a great many of them durst not look them in the face. Good night.

LETTER VI.

BLESSED be thy letter ! Blessed be the Eternal, who, from the bosom of his glory, has watched over the days of Achmed, has closed under his feet the abysses of the seas, and has not allowed that this dear letter should be swallowed up with him in the waves raised by the tempests ! Blessed be thou, my dear Giafar ! for having informed me that my father is happy ! Oh ! how the happiness of a father softens sleep, embellishes the morning, and increases the pleasures of the day ! Since my departure, whenever the sound of the church-clock announced to the world the gigantic steps of time, I said to myself : What is my father doing ? I said the same when the evening star summoned me to rest ; no doubt I again said so in my sleep ; for,
at

at the rising of the sun, those words escaped from my lips, and struck my dull ear ; it heard not yet the chirping of the birds, and already it had said again to my attentive heart : What is my father doing ? But yesterday, Giafar, I said to myself : My father is happy ! That is the case, since Giafar says so. I slept much less, but I slept much better. Long naps are for the unfortunate only : those whose heart is happy would always remain awake. Oh ! may Mahomet preserve those generous Frenchmen whose hand has secured my father from wretchedness, whose favours allow his old age to enjoy repose ! I see from here the place where he is walking ; I see the date-tree whose sacred shade shelters his venerable head from the rays of the sun ; the waters of Calis flow at his feet : a smile comes to soften the austerity of that beard as white as the sand of the deserts ; and
this

this smile greets the plenty promised by the waters of the Nile, that river which, like my father, is a stranger to deceit. Among rivers our Nile is great. What port would dare to compare it to the great of the earth? It sometimes refuses its favours; but when it promises them, it never deceives. “Remember,” said my father to me, “the lesson which it gives to mortals.”

He is desirous to come to me, sayst thou. If that is his wish, Giafar, abandon him not. Suffer not the old man to expose himself alone to the caprice of the waves. There is no one in the world but thee to whom I would venture to intrust my father. Who, in my absence, on board a strange vessel, would support his enervated body against the agitation of the billows? What eyes would watch that tranquillity should reign round his nocturnal couch? What hands would present the cup to his

his parched lips ? What voice would mingle itself with his to invoke on him the favours of the god of the Mamelukes ? And should the storm, Giafar, threaten and roar over his venerable head, should the angry winds dash against the rocks the fragile bark which bears my father, should the noisy and mournful scene of a shipwreck be displayed around him, should there no longer be, between the grave and his old age, any thing but the treacherous and moveable surface of the foaming seas, who would lend him the support of a body bold in strength and youth ? Who, with a vigorous arm, would guide him on the watery element, and find means to clear for him on the top of the waves, the path of life ? Wouldst thou, at such a critical moment, that the old man should exclaim: I was going to see my son : he had a friend, who left me alone, and I die a solitary death
between

between the land where my son is expecting me, and the land where his friend forgets me ! O Giafar, thou wilt not suffer it !

Let this nation among whom I am transported, let those men with whom I am now living, boast of their laws, their power, their greatness, their understanding, their commerce, and their arts ; they are not so rich as we ; they are not so well acquainted with filial piety. How oft have I seen thee quit thy young Aski to fly towards thy mother ! “ My mother is waiting “ for me,” didst thou say ; and away didst thou fly with the swiftness of an arrow. Thou readst her eyes, and her wishes, scarcely formed, were gratified ! Austere commands never issued from her mouth : thine ear is a stranger to the orders of a mother ; but how many times was it honoured by the expression and lan-
VOL. I. D guage

guage of gratitude! Here, my friend, they caress their children in the cradle : if a mother is young, her coquetry is flattered ; a son whom she suckles, sets off her beauty : if she is old, it is still coquetry ; the pride of fecundity succeeds to the pride of personal attractions. It is less through tenderness than vanity that the Frenchwomen are proud of being mothers : the birth of a child attests the power of their charms on their husband. As to the fathers, it is another thing ; but neither is it nature : they too frequently see in their sons nothing more than the perpetuity of their employments and honours. It is not a son that is born to them, but a fortunate pretext for invoking favours, places, and riches : father of a family is the common-place phrase of ambition as of misery. What is the consequence? It is that this eternal prodigality of an expression, al-

most

most always factitious, dries up the sensibility of those who govern; that, meeting every where with fathers of families, they no longer see them any where; that paternity, which, in a state, ought, above all, to be honoured, no longer inspires any other sentiment but indifference; and that the man whose heart has preserved the feelings of Nature, is repulsed with the same indifference as the ambitious man who affects them in order to make his way, or the poor man who displays them to excite interest.

I was passing near a palace: an old man was at the door; his nakedness was scarcely covered by his tattered garments. "Mameluke," said he to me, "I beg you to assist a father of a family." "What!" exclaimed I, "there is but a wall between treasures and him, and his voice has not pierced it! Good old man, take
 D 2 " this

“ this sequin.” Saying this, I went away. All at once a reflection struck me. Is a sequin enough ? said I to myself. If he has many children, tomorrow he will again feel the poignancy of distress. I turned back ; he was no longer there. Perceiving him at some distance, I followed him : he entered a house. I went up stairs after him, and, stopping a while at his door, I listened : he was talking to a woman. Wouldst thou believe it ? They were laughing at my simplicity ! At length I opened the door : they were seated at a table, which was covered with plenty. “ Where are your children ? ” — “ I have none.” — “ You have then told an untruth.” — “ No ; I spoke to you our language : that is all.” I went out of the house. “ He is not to be blamed,” said I, sighing. “ It is the fault of the laws ; they have not guarded the sacredness of the
“ title

“title of father of a family.” This man did me a great injury ! He forced me to renounce the astonishment which I had felt at the insensibility of the master of the palace. He did more : he taught me to be afraid to give. To steal a purse with a pistol, or in the name of virtue, where then is the difference ? Nevertheless, they punish the one with death, and the other remains without chastisement. How then do they reason in morality ? It is, however, the same crime.

Children, in their turn, become men. The French, extreme in all their affections, are rather kings than fathers in their families : as they have no uniform mode in expressing their tenderness, it is not the fathers who rear their sons, but their passions. Avarice, egotism, harshness, sometimes prepossessions too, prejudices, obstinacy, and ignorance, establish a barrier between

fathers and their children, What is their son in the cradle in regard to their love? A consequence of their pleasures. On what depends the continuation of this love? On the imitation of their defects, and not unfrequently of their vices. They never say: "My son will be a man;" but always: "My son will resemble me." And if it were true that no one would wish to resemble the father! judge after that. Giafar, what sorry gifts such a system of paternal tenderness confers on society. Listen to them: they are incessantly complaining of morals. Whose fault is it? They will have none but copies: a child is taught the character of his father, as a comedian is taught his part.

But when is the line drawn? The day when reason is awakened in the sons. The fathers thought themselves a family; and frequently the unhappy
men

men are surrounded only by indifferent persons, or even enemies. Then reason draws comparisons: the passions of the fathers and of the sons are in presence of each other, and war is declared; and should some scandalous uproar not add to the affronts of Nature, thanks must be given to the rules of decorum which they have had the art to substitute to sentiments. But, in the main, my friend, what can family happiness be among a nation where human respect is called for arbiter of the conduct of children towards their fathers, and of fathers towards their children?

Who then taught them to repeat incessantly: One owes attention to one's children, one owes respect to one's father? There is, consequently, among them a void which Nature does not fill up, since they have found time to calculate duties. Duties among men, well

and good ; but between the members of a family ! If this is the case, for what use do they reserve the heart ? Let us not be astonished if those men, in other respects so polished, fail so frequently in their duties towards their fellow creatures ; it must be said to their shame, it is because they have created for themselves duties towards their neighbours. What can man expect from man, when man is connected with his own relations by no other tie but duty ?

They treat their children like their gardens : in their eyes, gardens appropriated to the cultivation of fruit, are not fit to be placed near palaces ; they like such only as are adorned and steril. So it is with their sons : the graces of the body, the tinsel of the mind, and frivolous talents, are what they cultivate in them. The heart seldom occupies their attention : this is the fruit-
garden

garden which they despise. A day comes when marriage completely unlooses ties already so feebly drawn together. Happy when licentiousness has not anticipated marriage by bursting them asunder ! The son-in-law leads away the bride, or else the son goes and chooses for himself an asylum far from the father's residence. Leaving the paternal abode seems to them escaping from slavery. They affirm that their god will have it so : by their account, he has said to them : Wives, quit your fathers and mothers to follow your husbands : husbands, renounce all for your wives. And when one says to them : " This god has then commanded you to act with filial impiety ? " " What do you say ? " reply they : " Here is his fifth commandment : *Thou shalt honour thy father and mother.*" What a contradiction ! They honour them, and they abandon them ! Dost thou

know what is my opinion, Giafar? This latter precept comes from a god, the other is the work of man. Tell them this truth, they will treat you as a miscreant, an infidel, an atheist; an atheist above all, that is the name they give to all those who call in question, not God, but the opinion which they have of God. If I am not mistaken respecting the language of their devotees, he who believes God to be good believes not in God. I have read their history: in former times they butchered, massacred, and burnt whoever said to them: Suffer me to serve God in my own way. Sages have cured them a little of this madness: may they be so for ever! But are they cured? Is it the funeral-piles that they curse? No; but the sages who have extinguished them.

However, be not alarmed; these sages are numerous. I observe their
conduct.

conduct. They are equally hostile to the hypocrites of impiety as to the hypocrites of devotion. They have a method of diffusing their advice, with which we are unacquainted on the banks of the Nile: wouldst thou believe that here, if I chose, three or four hours would be sufficient for me to have five or six thousand copies of the letter which I am writing. This is the master-piece of their industry: it is the most admirable portion of their arts. Thus, in less than five or six days, a man enlightens with his understanding not only all France, but all Europe. As long as printing shall subsist, though but five or six sages should remain on earth, there would be no reason to despair. Fortunately, for the triumph of knowledge, the French possess the very spirit of contradiction: they are irreligious when they are required to be devout; and devout, when their irreligion is ridiculed. But their

government is tolerant ; their laws are philosophic ; and presently, having arrived at such a point, in this respect, that they no longer find aliment for contradiction, and incessantly meeting with laws which shall say to them : “ Be devout, if that pleases you, or be “ not devout, if that is also your pleasure ;” their attention to these matters will imperceptibly be weakened : the pleasure of doing will be deadened by the possibility of doing. In losing the title of persecuted, fanaticism will be without influence ; and, in length of time, this people will have no other tinge remaining of their religious versatility, but the clear, simple, and natural idea of a God who supports the virtuous, consoles the unfortunate, stamps a character of greatness on all actions, and tranquillizes the honest man respecting a futurity unknown to all. Good night, Giafar.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

I AGAIN return to the subject of their family education. A few days ago I was at the house of one of those ladies whom they call *de la haute compagnie*. She was surrounded by flowers : her servants eagerly displayed before her the spoils of, perhaps twenty gardens. She examined, scolded, rejected, and disdained ; to her liking, there were no roses fresh enough, no carnations of sufficient beauty, and none of the lilies were spotless. In a corner of the room, a tall, thin, grave-looking man, was humming a tune, and, seated at a table, was writing, erasing what he had written, looking at the ceiling, rubbing his forehead, writing again, and then again erasing. “ How handsome are those flowers ! ” said I to this lady : “ why do you despise them ? The spring affords
“ nothing

“ nothing more beautiful.”—“ Fright-
 “ ful !” replied she. “ Would you have
 “ me present such flowers to my fa-
 “ ther ?” —“ They are for your fa-
 “ ther ? I then excuse you for being
 “ so difficult. Well, wait till to-
 “ morrow ; the succeeding night will
 “ be less showery no doubt, and to-
 “ morrow’s dawn will produce you
 “ roses which have not been tarnished
 “ by a storm.” —“ To-morrow ! are
 “ you dreaming ? To-morrow shall I
 “ want flowers to present to my fa-
 “ ther ?” —“ I do not understand you :
 “ is not the pleasure of presenting
 “ flowers to your father a want of
 “ every day ?” —“ He is a comical
 “ fellow, this Mameluke ! Is every day
 “ my father’s *fête* * ?” —“ I thought so.

* In France, it is customary to celebrate, by a
fête or entertainment, the anniversary of the
 saint after whom a person is named, in lieu of
 keeping the birth-day.—*Translator.*

“ And

“ And does this fête often return ? ”—
“ Once a year ; that is quite often
“ enough methinks. ”—“ You might,
“ in my opinion, as well not greet him
“ at all as greet him once a year ”—
“ And custom then ? ”—“ Ah ! cus-
“ tom has here established that chil-
“ dren greet their father but once a
“ year ! yet the year is rather long,
“ and if you forget the day ”—“ My
“ father gives a dance ”—“ I under-
“ stand ; but for the dance ”—“ Faith,
“ with the dance—If, by chance, one
“ of my female attendants had not
“ pronounced in my hearing the word
“ *ball*, I should entirely have forgotten
“ my father’s fête. I should have
“ been inconsolable ”—“ At forgetting
“ the ball ? ”—“ The ball ? no ; but
“ his fête ; it would have been an
“ awkward piece of business. ”—“ But
“ how happens it that the sight of
“ your father yesterday did not remind
“ you

“ you that to-day was ” — “ Yesterday !
 “ I have not seen him these two
 “ months ” — “ I understand you : he
 “ does not reside in Paris ” — “ What !
 “ his house is close by ” — “ Close by !
 “ and you have not seen him these
 “ two months ? ” — “ Even so ; his house
 “ is the abode of dullness, he dines
 “ early, he sees but little company ;
 “ he never plays : my husband is soon
 “ tired of staying in such a place.
 “ What should I do there ? Our in-
 “ clinations, our ages are so different !
 “ Were I to see him oftener I should
 “ weary him ; that would weary me,
 “ and I am so fond of my father !
 “ Well, Sir,” said she, addressing her-
 self to the tall, thin man, “ and those
 “ verses ? ” — “ What verses do you
 “ mean ? ” said I — “ A compliment
 “ for my father ” — “ Why not an apo-
 “ logy ? ” — “ An epigram ” — “ At
 “ most a piece of advice. But pardon
 “ my

“ my ignorance, you are preparing a
“ compliment for your father, and you
“ cause it to be written by another !
“ You have therefore dictated it ? ”—
“ Do I know how to write verses ? ”—
“ And why verses ? ” why not say to
“ him in simple prose : Father ”—
“ Like the common people ? that
“ would be gallant truly ! ”—“ Not
“ gallant, but natural ”—“ And must
“ not I sing ? There will be a hundred
“ persons assembled at his house, for
“ the sole purpose of hearing me. ”—
“ So much the better ; you will sing,
“ you will dance, and you call that
“ your father’s fête ? To me it seems
“ that it will rather be your own. ”—
“ Why not ? When Prudence is our
“ guide, we must strew with flowers
“ the path of duty. ”—During this part
of the conversation, she ran over the
verses.—“ But that is pitiful, Sir ?
“ There’s no point, no wit in these
“ verses ;

“ verses ; they are flat, and insipid ! ”
 “ —How so, Madam ? I have made the
 “ heart speak in a respectful and na-
 “ tural manner : I thought.” —“ Fye,
 “ fye ! ” —“ You are in the right, Ma-
 “ dam : you must write those verses
 “ over again, Sir. Can the language of
 “ the heart, expressed in a respectful
 “ and natural manner, be applauded in
 “ a family, the head of which is affec-
 “ tionately greeted by his offspring
 “ once a year ? The lady wishes to
 “ be applauded ; that is very easy to
 “ accomplish : is it not a farce in which
 “ she is going to perform ? ” The poet
 smiled : I took my leave, and went
 away. And this, Giafar, is their filial
 piety ! Now, let the public be ques-
 tioned respecting this lady : she is the
 most loving daughter, her father adores
 her, and she idolizes her father. She
 will pay him every two or three months
 a formal visit ; she will enter his room,
 embrace

embrace him, seat herself, yawn, rise from her chair, and go away. If her father dines at her house: "Dine with me," she will say to eight or ten persons; "I will not have my father be alone." Alone in company with his daughter! If her father invites her to dinner, twenty strangers are also invited; it is an important affair; it is all the show and etiquette of ceremony. Dinner being over, it is her day for occupying a box at the Opera; and away she drives; she has dressed herself, and the trouble of the toilet must not be lost. If the old man is ill, she will pay him one or two visits perhaps; yet care must be taken; for the disorder has not manifested itself clearly, and the physician knows not what it is; besides, a sick chamber is so unwholesome! But five or six times a day a lackey will present himself at the gate, in order to have the report of the
state

state of the patient. And who, after that, will dare to say that every duty is not performed? Such, however, are the limits of this great idolatry!

Among tradespeople it is another thing: as, in this class, every thing is generally conducted in contradiction to common sense; the direct heirs, instead of being, as in other families, in a descending line, are in these, on the contrary, in an ascending line; that is to say, every generation thinks itself of a degree more elevated than that which preceded it. The children here look down on their fathers from the pinnacle of their fame: "What should we do at their house?" say they. It is a place most insufferably tiresome. Sunday, well and good: the shop is shut. If they are the children of a lawyer, a notary, a justice of peace, "Do not speak to me of my father's house: dine with his clerks, for shame;

“ shame ; those fellows would bow to
 “ me in the street, at public places, at
 “ the public gardens : can I mix in
 “ such company, as the wife of a clerk,
 “ of a head scribbler in an office, of a
 “ petty banker ? ” — “ But your fa-
 “ ther ! your mother ! ” — “ I love them
 “ much ; but let them come to my
 “ house if they choose. Most assur-
 “ edly I have made up my mind on
 “ that point ; I shall not go and catch
 “ cold in a shop, inhale the dust of a
 “ warehouse, traverse the pestilential
 “ air of a lawyer’s office : the public
 “ have only to see us there, and they
 “ would make a jest of it : for what
 “ would they take us ? ” — They would
 take them for the children of their fa-
 thers, and this is what they dread.

Thou mayest suppose, Giafar, that
 the scenes of humbler life would com-
 pensate thee for these disgusting pic-
 tures ? Banish the deceitful idea : thou
 hast

hast just seen pride prevail over nature ; now thou art on the point of seeing her subjugated by rudeness, indecency, drunkenness, sometimes misery, sometimes by what is still worse, I mean debauchery. The same garret contains all the family : children in the cradle, youths grown up, girls marriageable, the father, the mother, and sometimes the grand-father. Straw is the common bed ; tatters, the livery ; oaths, the language. There, old age is neglected ; maturity uncontrolled ; youth and infancy unprotected. The father and mother regulate the diapason of this discordant assemblage. Wretchedness sours the mind, and blasphemy breaks forth ; drunkenness bewilders, and obscenity circulates ; characters jar, and quarrels arise ; and before whom ? Before an old man, bent under the weight of years, and whose present profanation is the rude and
just

just punishment for his former low lived licentiousness ; and before whom besides ? Before children whose attentive ear eagerly swallows all the filthy discourse which they already comment, which they are yet far from understanding, and whose flexible intelligence greedily catches all the idioms of debauchery to enliven their innocent hours.

In France, and above all, in Paris, the police is an admirable thing ; it takes care that the streets are well swept, the lamps well lighted, the quays unencumbered, and the navigation of the river unobstructed ; it exercises its severity against cabriolets driven with the rapidity of lightning, against pamphlets produced surreptitiously, against licentious prints half-concealed between the blinds of a shop ; there is not a swindler that it does not surprize, not a pickpocket that it does not detect,

not

not a robber that it does not discover ; it issues ordinances to protect the public from the danger of mad dogs, restive horses, and over-driven bullocks ; through decency, it prohibits bathing ; through prudence, skaiting ; through politeness, boxing. All this, no doubt, is very proper ; but it passes, without frowning, by the side of the child of five or six years old, who answers by blasphemy to the philippic, now and then blasphemous, of its father or mother. A load of charcoal, a sack of flour, a basket of fish, are the inviolable privilege of a sacrilegious dialect ; it leaves the ear of infancy open to this grammar, the syntax of which would have made the hair of the Titans themselves stand on end, when they were setting the gods at defiance. This is the language of the markets of Paris, and no more need be said. What do I assert ? It is little to suffer it, people
are

are amused by it ! Even persons of a superior rank listen to it for the sake of gratifying their curiosity ; it is introduced on the stage ; poetry prostitutes to it its charms ; to it Vadé, Jeannot, and Brunet are indebted for immortality ; they have made as great a noise as Homer, Virgil, and Voltaire. In a word, this language is a play : I believe this to be the case : it touches the heavens by the thunder which it provokes, and the earth by the licentiousness which it irritates. But, in the mean time, the ear of youth vibrates under its redundant and filthy energy. With the vocabulary of guilt soon arrives the idea of guilt. The corruption of the tongue paves the way to the gangrene of the heart. An indecent print is confiscated, and ten thousand, a hundred thousand beardless, acting, and living caricatures, surpassing Aretin himself, are suffered to gesticulate without the

smallest interruption ! They stop, and mix with the thousands of courtezans and their thousands of lovers, who make the streets their harem and divan and who have anticipated them in the career into which they are entering. Thus are drawn together and fastened all the links of the chain of corruption. From this academy will issue, when they have attained the years of manhood, new pickpockets, swindlers, and thieves, whom the police will also detect; this is not doubtful; but after whom, unquestionably, it would not have the trouble of seeking, were not the language of the markets thought a very humorous language, and that a child of the lower class may blaspheme God without any ill consequence, because its father keeps not a coach, and that a brat of seven or eight years old may answer its mother in a manner in which the most impudent Tartar would
no

not reply to the most infamous prostitute.

They had an unfortunate epoch in their Revolution : a few tyrants daily caused a hundred heads to be struck off ; the common people flocked to this hideous spectacle. “ What,” said they, “ the people, instead of putting “ to death their executioners, applaud “ them !” Thence thousands of discourses from their moralists, their philosophers, and their public writers, on the corruption of the morals of the nation ; the one accused the power of the factions ; another, the absence of religion ; a third, the gold of foreign powers ; a fourth, the inefficacy of the laws ; a fifth, idleness ; a sixth, wretchedness. Were they blind ? Was it necessary to seek so remote a cause ? The language of the markets was there : this is all the mystery.

By the account of some, all this im-

morality is modern. That is not true ; it requires good sense only to ascertain the fact. It is impossible to mistake its air of antiquity. The ladies of the market ! This was an object of no small consideration for their kings ! “ ’Tis the good people of our good “ city of Paris,” said they. These ladies went to Versailles, they embraced that great Louis XIV. who never embraced his own children ; that Louis XV. who embraced none but his mistresses. A few dozens of oaths composed their eloquent harangue. “ What good-hearted creatures ! ” said the spectators, “ how roundly they swore ! ” They were regaled with drink till they became intoxicated, and were driven about in the carriages of the monarch : vanity lent her car to the triumph of intemperance. “ See how you are beloved by the people ! ” said the courtiers. They called these ladies the
people !

people! Why not? They treated husbandmen like slaves. The ladies of the markets returned to Paris; they cried out, "Long live *Louis!*" but what *Louis?* Those which had been thrown into their lap, not him that they had embraced. And these are the people! But misconceive me not, Giafar; these are not the French people: they are nothing more than a species of slaves, such as are to be found in great cities only: I say slaves, because the subjects of shameless debauchery and rudeness are slaves by the right of conquest which the basest passions impose on the conquered; I say slaves, because that class constantly consists of slaves, not by nature, but through brutal stupidity, whatever be the government, whether monarchical or republican. Under despotism, they can no more than adore and tremble; under monarchy, than rebel and fly.

under liberty, than insult and plunder. It would be no difficult task to draw them from such a condition, not in a day without doubt, but in less than a quarter of a century; for under this rough exterior a French heart is still to be found: and what a heart, Giafar, is that of this nation! What would be necessary for the accomplishment of that object? Severe penalties against such language; chastise the tongue, purify the ear; and morals will come.

If some of their wits, their journalists, for example, those men, in short, with whom Paris is thronged, accustomed to find it much more convenient to throw ridicule on a question than to examine it, because for the one a little jargon only is necessary, and the other requires knowledge; if those men, much more eager to give a hasty decision than to discuss the merits of a subject, because the one dis-

guises

guises nullity, and the other discovers it; if, I say, some of those men heard me, they would call me a simpleton: be it so; but I should, in return, tax them with pride. How with pride? Many persons formerly were very glad that the common people had a rude language, because then, when a man did not speak like the people, the politeness of his language drew the attention of his hearers to observe that he was decorated with a blue ribbon, a feather, an epaulet, a counsellor's gown; things which would not have been remarked, perhaps, had the people used a decent language. At this day, for a contrary reason, persons are still very glad that the common people preserve their disgusting language: in France, there no longer are orders of knighthood, ribbons, and armorial bearings; the politeness of language supplies the place of all that: the people must needs speak inde-

E 4

cently.

cently. Dost thou perceive that, by the elegance of expression, the man of the world says tacitly : “ *Are you sensible of the distance there is between me and those folks ?* ” In the course of their Revolution, they talked a great deal about equality ; but they have taken good care not to touch that string. Had a general law prescribed politeness of language, equality would have been established in spite of themselves, and this is what they did not wish. And, indeed, their *would-be* patriots were particularly attentive in aping a coarseness of expression ; this was certainly the best mean to banish for ever the idea of correcting the language of the people.

It is said that, at this very moment, they are revising the dictionary of their French Academy. Thou wilt ask me what is the French Academy ? Thou shalt be informed in due time. I have
a cu-

a curiosity to see whether they will preserve certain formulæ of that dictionary, for instance, whether there will still be words with this commonplace explanation: *a popular word, it is a low expression*; that is to say: do not make use of it, for you would speak like the common people. Now, as this word is low, it is evident that the people who employ it are much beneath you. It would, undoubtedly, have been more natural and more philosophical, perhaps, to write a word which the common people are invited not to employ, because its use would occasion a presumption that there exists in the state classes which are superior to them. I do not rightly know, when such a word falls under the eyes of an enlightened man, what treaty he then makes with his conscience. I will not make use of it, will he say, because it is popular. Very well: here then he is distinguished, by language

at least, from the mass of the people; and if he belongs not to the people, what is he then in the state? And this principle once laid down in regard to language, in the first instance, wilt thou say to me, Giafar, where will the consequences stop?

I admire the French; they have, in the denominations of their republican dignities, borrowed the major part of those of ancient Rome: they have senators, tribunes, prefects, ediles, orators, and juris consults. They have had triumvirs, decemvirs, and proconsuls, who will not soon be forgotten. They have not had quæstors, it is true; but, with the exception of the name, they have men who possess all their qualities. They have omitted to appoint censors only; this office, however, was not useless.—Adieu!

LETTER VIII.

I TOLD thee, not long since, that the French possess a great spirit of contradiction. It gives them a very gay appearance in the eyes of the observer. When they lived under a monarchy, all the books which were put into the hands of boys at college, spoke of nothing but a republic; it was Brutus expelling the Tarquins; Cicero disconcerting Cataline; and Cato stabbing himself, in order not to survive liberty. At the present day, when they live in a republic, it is another thing: how many would wish for their children an education in which the words *republic* and *liberty* were never pronounced! I believe, on my honour, that they would think the history of the Persian or Mogul kings too democratic to be intrusted to them.

Each successive day scarcely suffices for the variety of their fashions in clothes, trinkets, furniture, and equipages. In education, it is quite the contrary; at all times they had a taste only for things superannuated.


If I am not mistaken, formerly in France men were formed only, and not educated: at this day they are educated, and not formed. Then habits contradicted education: now education of a certain description will contradict habits. Thus, habits were formed without the concurrence of education; and at present, several persons would have institutions without the concurrence of habits. At all times this was and always will be a great defect. I have carefully interrogated their old men, I have attentively read their history, and I know the French perfectly. Formerly, a young man, born under the monarchy, left college without
even

even suspecting what a monarchy might be: he was quite a Roman. He had lived only with the Decii, the Fabii, the Scipios. How often, perhaps, had he not, in idea, exercised the consulate, the prætorship, and, for aught I know, sat in the Capitol, conquered Carthage, and humbled kings! How often had not his ear, nobly awakened by a generous ambition, relished the title of *imperator*! And it is worthy of remark that, in their Revolution, the most generous, the most magnanimous, and the most heroic, were the young men, because the latter found themselves brought into action at a period when they had no void to fill up between the opinions received at college, and the opinions then newly adopted by the nation.

Imbued with principles of ancient Rome, it cost them nothing to act like Romans. At this period, alas! too short,

short, national enthusiasm had effaced habits; and education, in some, not having to struggle against them, it became wholly developed. It may be said, to the pride of the latter, that they have not degenerated from Rome: it is these young men who have conquered the world. But before, under Louis XV. under the Regent, under Louis XIV. and farther back, figure to thyself, if thou canst, the surprize of all those youths, when, on leaving college, and bearing in their mind all the ideas of the *forum*, they came into contact with all the prejudices of the Assyrians and Persians! In lieu of Marcellus, Paulus Emilius, and Pompey, they met only with Denys, Aristobulus, and Mithridates; in lieu of conscript fathers, only a grand council; in lieu of tribunes, only satraps. At first view, all the women were Virginias, Cornelias, and Porcias; and in
the

the first who subjugated them, they frequently met only with a Cleopatra. Thus, then, they saw themselves all at once placed under the yoke of those kings whom a hundred times, perhaps, in their childish imagination, they had conquered ; in the midst of those great men whose luxury they disdained ; of those nations whose slavery they despised. They dreamt only of iron and liberty, and met with nothing but gold and effeminacy ; only of comitia, and saw none but vassals ; only of harangues, and found nought but silence. To crown the mischief, their simplicity was laughed at ; the liberal notions which they had imbibed in their books were ridiculed ; as well as every thing that their ardent genius had till then adored. What was the consequence ? It was this—disconcerted, confused, and ashamed, they no longer regarded but as brilliant chimeras,



chimeras, all those generous principles with which history had enriched their memory ; or frequently, what was still a hundred times worse, they came to detest those seeds of political virtues, to which they attributed the awkward, borrowed air, that the world, into which they were entering, endeavoured to correct in them by epigrams. Hence it appears that, in fact, they were not educated, since ten years of education were to them as if they had not taken place, at least in regard to the opinions which it was necessary for them to assume on governments, politics, and public morals, as a regulator for the remainder of their life. Thus the habits of society enveloped them on leaving college, and hastened to efface what education had engraved on their mind. If this education was lost to the individual, it was also lost to the country ; for, not having been educated for
the

the government of the state, the state, consequently, found not in them men attached to its principles; they clung to it only from the empire of habits, much in the same manner as foreigners yield, through politeness or interest, to the laws, the manners, and the customs of the nations they visit.

Under the monarchy, education was republican, because it was directed by priests. This will appear to thee a paradox; nevertheless, it is a truth.

There was a great alliance between the priesthood and the throne; but this alliance secured not the same guarantee to both powers, and security was not likely to be equal between them. The priesthood reigned by opinion: in order to preserve for itself the support of the throne, it should seem that it was necessary for it to cause the influence of that opinion to turn on the people for the profit

profit of obedience. The throne therefore had a great auxiliary in the priesthood; but the throne well knew that it could exist without the priesthood, and that the priesthood could not exist without opinion. From that moment the throne had not to fear that the priesthood would ever think of opening the eyes of the people, in order to snatch them from its authority; for a power does not reduce itself to absolute insignificance for the sole pleasure of overthrowing the empire of its ally. Thus, although the priesthood has more than once made the throne tremble by the abuse of religious opinions, it was, in fact, more dependent on the throne than the throne on it: therefore it was not its interest to manifest sufficient frankness in its alliance, to consent to render slavery complete, for there might occur a circumstance of caprice, policy, fickleness, or despotism, in which the throne would, without

out danger, have broken its treaty with the priesthood. Then it would have remained alone, and without succour, in the midst of those people whom it had itself accustomed to the immobility of slavery. Hence it is easy to perceive that, in this alliance, the guarantee was almost entirely on the side of the throne, and all the uneasiness on the side of the priesthood.

In such cases, the party that risks the most is the most politic. The priesthood thought it had obviated the danger, by insensibly accustoming men to see a pontifical throne rise amidst the thrones of the world. Giving a free scope to all the influence of opinion, it diverted the obedience of the people from its natural path, in order to attach it to that throne which it had placed at the gate of heaven: it emboldened men to think that kings were kings only by the will or permission

sion of the latter, and thrones were thus placed in the second line. The struggle was terrible; it lasted several centuries. The evil increased to such a degree, that the brutal stupidity of nations passed for divine perfection; the resistance of kings, for popular sedition; and the despotism of a pontiff, for the will of Nature; and this would have lasted still, had the priesthood had sufficient political perseverance to confine its monarch eternally to a majesty purely celestial.

But, in the course of time, the man was seen, in spite of the magic crown of glory with which he was adorned; the censer, in ceasing to smoke, suffered the word to be perceived. This mortal Jehovah was discovered to be nothing more than a king, who wished to have none but kings for his lieutenants; and, for the first time, the success of ambition dug the grave of ambition

ion itself. What did the priesthood
 en do? As an enemy, profoundly
 mbled, but more profoundly learned,
 suffered not its resentment to ad-
 ve it to separate its cause from that
 thrones. It was under the neces-
 y of renouncing the pride of placing
 ngs between it and the people: it
 tened to address, which taught it to
 ace itself between the people and
 ngs. Every where it got hold of
 ie rising generations; every where,
 esiding exclusively over education, it
 stablished it on two grand founda-
 ons, religious intolerance, and the
 udy of the dead languages. Why
 intolerance? In order to eternize its
 efenders. Why the dead languages?
 n order to veil from the eyes of youth
 ie knowledge, too dangerous for its
 urpose, of modern history, and being
 aster of the choice of ancient au-
 hors, to open to pupils those only
 whose

whose writings might raise in the heart a principle of hatred against kings. By a calculation no less terrible in its consequences, Quintus Curtius and Cæsar's Commentaries were alone admitted to the honour of partaking, with the historians of republics, the attention of the pupils. When in order to inspire young minds with the delirium of conquests, and to vitiate the principles of republics, the virtues of which priests were not desirous that men should practise, but the licentiousness. And why so? In order to make, without committing themselves, this indirect confidence to their pupils, that there is no power so great that men may not overthrow him when they choose. Thus by this plan, truly astonishing from its dark and profound policy, perceived but scarcely marked out by the universities, which had not the art to

carry

carry it beyond the indiscipline of their scholars, but conceived since in its aggregate, balanced in all its parts, considered in all its results, executed in all its extent by a religious body which the Europeans called Jesuits, the priesthood had succeeded in creating for itself a guarantee against kings, and, by sowing those seeds of republicanism which it flattered itself with expanding or stifling at the pleasure of its interest, in husbanding for itself the means of controlling kings or of revenging itself on them occasionally, if they attempted to separate their cause from that of priests.

Remark, above all, the blindness of kings. This religious body was, by principle, religion, and constitution, independent of all potentates. Dost thou conceive that madness of thrones, always bent on acknowledging none but subjects, and, nevertheless, intrust-
ing

ing the education of subjects to independent men? Kings banished these Jesuits from their dominions a few years before the Revolution. Dost thou understand, Giafar, a few years before the Revolution. Many crimes were imputed to them! That mode of education and the usurpation of that right of education were the only ones for which they ought to have been punished, according to monarchical principles: these were the only ones which were not thought of. Dost thou now perceive the astonishing mystery of this republican education under the monarchy?

There was a time when it carried men further than the interest of the priesthood required, and than it, undoubtedly, foresaw, since, for an instant, it appeared enveloped in the fall of the throne; but at last the throne was levelled, and the priesthood has
rise

risen again almost triumphant from its **own** ruins. View again, with an observing eye, the plan of ancient education which I have just mentioned, and judge whether that education was directed for the advantage of the throne or the advantage of the priesthood. See whether the attack which crowned heads made on it, by the expulsion of the Jesuits, was not quickly punished, and whether this revenge was not the first consequence of the principles of that education ; see whether the resurrection of the priesthood found the same obstacles as the resurrection of the throne, and whether this resurrection is not the second consequence of those very principles.

However, I know not whether this resurrection ought to excite such serious alarms as philosophers conceive from it. The priesthood, having no longer the same fears, will no longer

have the same interests: its policy, being no longer engaged in maintaining the equilibrium between the throne and it, nor in guarding against the same dangers, must infallibly take another direction. It will devote to the improvement of morals the exertion of mind which it bestowed on its own preservation. Here it is a common place proverb: *The people must have a religion.* The pleasant part of the business is, that the man who says so always detaches himself from the people. "The people must have a religion," says he. It is just as if he said: "It is evident that a religion is necessary for persons of that description, but not for a man like me." If, in this manner one was to consult them by turns, it would happen that they would all wish to have a religion for others, and that no one would wish to have any for himself. What inconsistency!

sistency ! “ There must be a religion,” says a comedian ; and to-morrow that religion will exclude him from the list of the living and the dead. A fop, a fine lady, a prude, and a superannuated coquette, likewise say the same thing ; and to-morrow the temples will become the theatre of their scandal, of their assignations, and of their irreverence. The magistrate, the lawyers, the merchants, and the financiers, also say it ; and to-morrow, perhaps, fraudulent speculations of commerce ; to-morrow, perhaps, pains bestowed to cause the powerful-unjust man to triumph over the feeble and oppressed one ; to-morrow, perhaps, the condemnation of the innocent, sold to the gold of the guilty, will consume the hours claimed by worship. The same thing is repeated by workmen of all classes ; and public-houses, and rendezvous of pleasure

and recreation, will be preferred by them to religious ceremonies. It is not therefore for themselves that all these men wish to have a religion, since they really choose not to follow it. And for whom then ? “ For the people,” say they. Shew me then the people.

Oh ! how wrong are priests and philosophers, not to come to a right understanding ! The former say ; there must be a religion ; the latter say ; there must be morality ; and both, in looking at each other, knit their brow. What do they say, however, unless it be the same thing ? The name alone differs ; but let them each translate it into their own language, and they will see that the idea is the same. Are there two beings more excellent on earth than a good priest and a good philosopher, when they advise men, when they speak to them of the divinity,

nity, when they console them in their afflictions, when they support them by favours, when they encourage them to virtue ? What therefore, is the distance which separates them ? But the priest says, that to him alone belongs the right to do those things : then the priest is in the wrong ; for it is better that two men should do good on earth than one alone ; and that priest is not the excellent priest of whom I am speaking. But the priest says that the best of philosophers is the enemy of God ; then the priest is in the wrong, for the philosopher never affirms that God is the enemy of good priests ; and that priest is not the excellent priest of whom I am speaking.

LETTER IX.

I SHALL now speak to thee of their plays. This was a kind of amusement which genius invented for the support of morality; it called poetry to its aid to give more gracefulness to its language, and lend to its eloquence a form more brilliant, or accents more affecting, in order that its lessons might more easily be imprinted on the memory, and find their way more surely to the heart. Sometimes it had recourse to history, and brought forward memorable actions, either virtuous or criminal; raised from the dead persons who had committed them; made them act and speak as they ought to have done at such a period of their life; and, in order to instruct the people to whom it presented these mock-representations, frequently ascribed to great delinquents, or to great

great heroes, the rewards or punishments which divine providence, or human justice, had owed to them, and which they had not always obtained. This is what they call tragedy. Sometimes it observed society, studied their vices or absurdities, implanted them in certain personages, surrounded these with secondary actors, whose motions, skilfully combined, set off to greater advantage the principal characters; endeavoured to cause the intentions of the latter, whether wicked, treacherous, or whimsical, to miscarry by intrigues capable of exciting laughter; instructed playfulness to sacrifice gaily its victims under the eyes of the originals that it took for models, and laboured to correct mankind, by forcing them to laugh at their own oddities. This is comedy, Thus thou art acquainted with tragedy and comedy, which constitute the great attraction of

F 4

their

have chosen that a dramatic work should present, at once, unity of action, unity of time, and unity of place. Accustomed, off the stage, to touch lightly on every subject, to direct their attention to a thousand various objects, to seize at one and the same time, a crowd of sketches, to compare their results, and make the mind travel, with the rapidity of lightning, through contrasts the most opposite, they have found, through their very aversion to constraint, a sort of pleasure in imposing on themselves one of a transient description. It might be said that it was in order to enjoy the power of placing themselves, when they pleased, in a situation foreign to their habitual fickleness, that they adopted unity of action, and that they thought it very agreeable to exact from themselves a factitious attention for two hours; while, in the rest of their life, they refused

refused a real attention to objects the most important. In fact, if the interests of the State are in question, they will complain of the tiresome length of the sittings of the councils. At the expiration of an hour, they will lay aside the most instructive book ; they will scarcely bestow a few seconds on the perusal of a contract on which their fortune depends ; they will take a hasty view of the monuments of twenty centuries, and boast of having examined them ; they will exhaust at one dinner the subject of a hundred conversations, and will not be, for one moment, attentive to what they eat, to what they drink, to what is said, or to what they say. If he is at the theatre, then, and only then, all his intellectual faculties are fixed on one object ; there only he is pensive, and full of meditation and reflection. Woe be to the author who should attempt to occupy him with dif-

ferent interests ! Numbers of catcalls would presently punish this crime of theatrical high-treason. In consequence of this spirit of fickleness, they seem too frequently strangers to the attention due to truth and reality, and it is even through inattention that they wish to be attentive to a fiction : but, in short, let it be a defect or buffoonery, taste has availed itself of this disposition. here a theatrical piece presents but one interest ; no episodes but such as relate to it, no developments but such as concern it, no springs but such as are connected with it ; the subject, the moral it contains, the example it proposes, the consequences resulting from it, the lesson it gives, all is one. A good piece of their great dramatic writers is the *chef d'œuvre* of wisdom and genius. It might be said that a good theatrical piece in France is an anchor which reason has dropped in order.

order 'to secure herself there against shipwreck.

They have, moreover, chosen that the action represented should be understood to last no more than twenty-four hours : this is what they call unity of time. But how assemble in the space of two hours, an action the course of which has required twenty-four ? Remember well that I am speaking of plays ; but, thou wilt say, those who fill the parts act, and are supposed to act for twenty-four hours. Be it so ; yet, in an action of twenty-four hours, how many intermediate moments, how many fleeting episodes ! If they are not quite foreign to it, they are not at least necessary to it. I will even suppose that the twenty-four hours are entirely claimed by the action—is it not true, that if thou wert in a town, where it should really take place, thou wouldst perceive no more of this great event than

than what should be executed under thy eyes at the place where thou shouldst happen to be? All the rest would reach thee only by recital: thy attention would be withdrawn from every thing useless, in order to be fixed only on the action itself, its origin, its progress, and its *dénouement*. Thou wouldst add to what thou shouldst have seen of it thyself those auxiliary details; but, most assuredly, it would take thee less than two hours to hear them. After that, thou mayest easily conceive that, if thou art witness of a real action, such, for instance, as a conspiracy, a revolution, or, in short, any other great event, the course of which should have lasted twenty-four hours, two hours are sufficient for thee not only to learn of it what thou shouldst not have seen, but also to review in thy memory all that thou wert witness of, and even what preceded and led to this event:

thy

thy mind may much more readily accommodate itself to the brevity of a representation which comprehends, in the space of two hours, an action that will require twenty-four; since the representation proceeds here, in regard to the spectator, who beholds a fictitious action represented, as his memory would proceed in recollecting a real action of equal duration, and which, in the course of the day even, I suppose, should have passed under his eyes.

This theatrical rule of twenty-four hours is, therefore, founded on reason. It is the result of profound reflection on the manner in which the mind operates. It next belongs to the genius of the dramatic author to know how to throw skilfully into the interval of the acts all that belongs to the action itself, but which may be removed from sight, which a word is sufficient to make the audience suppose,

pose, and the useless representation or development of which would be prejudicial to the conciseness necessary for the work ; and, in this manner, to leave to the intelligence of the spectator the care of assembling (if I may so express myself) the links of the chain of the event which art ordains that the author should partly conceal from him. In a word, every thing is reduced to this point : Can the mind seize in two hours the details of an action which employed twenty-four ? Now, as a theatrical representation, whether it comprehends an action known, or create a possible action, is no more than the repetition of the manner in which the mind of every man acts when he charges his memory to retrace to him an event to which he was a witness, or in which he was an actor, it thence results, that not only nothing is painful in this rule, but
that

that it is mathematically founded on Nature.

To these two unities they have added unity of place, and their great dramatic writers have adhered to it with an attention bordering on the most scrupulous degree of exactness. In this respect, they carry their delicacy so far as not to remove their personages; I do not say merely from the palace, or any other edifice where they make them act, but even from the apartment or any other place where they have shewn them at the rising of the curtain. Corneille frequently gives an example of having conquered this difficulty, as in *Rodogune*, *Polyeucte*, *Nirrodème*. He has sometimes deviated from it, as in *Cinna*, *Le Cid*, *Les Toraces*, *Sertorius*, and these are not less, on that account, considered master-pieces. Not one of their authors has, in this particular, gone farther

farther than Racine; and after him Crebillon, who, in every other respect, is so very inferior. Voltaire has not laid himself under so much restraint, witness *Sémiramis*, *Tancrède*, *Mérope*, and they are fine works; but it is evident that he does it with a precaution, a reserve, I would say, with a parsimoniousness, which proves all the importance he attached to this rule, and he has subjected himself to it whenever he could make it accord with the greatness of his conceptions, as in *Zaire*, *Alzire*, &c. &c. The more modern authors have relaxed a little from this strictness, and I fear that this is an evil. It is with rules of art as with laws in politics; they cannot be infringed without enlarging the limit marked by respect; and this limit removed, God knows where it will again find a solid foundation. Unity of place is no longer for the latter, at the present day,

day, an apartment nor even the walls of a palace; they see it in a whole city, in all the extent of a camp, sometimes even in a rather spacious part of a province, which, however, may be travelled over without transgressing the rule of the twenty-four hours, and that unity of action, to which they shew themselves more faithful. Thus, without exciting much murmur among the public, because there are fewer people well informed than others, they make their personages pass from a palace to a public square, a prison, a temple, a forest, and so on. I must observe, that what I have just said of these rules is applicable to comedy as well as to tragedy.

However, unity of place is, as well as the two others, founded on reason and on nature. The spectator, on entering the theatre, willingly adopts the idea that he is going to visit Constantinople,

tinople, Babylon, or any other place. It is an imaginary journey which he consents to perform before he enters. As soon as he has taken his seat, he fancies himself arrived : but should the author choose to convey him all at once to the distance of some hundred leagues from that spot, the spectator looks at the bench on which he is seated ; he sees that he has not moved from his place, and begins laughing ; and when a Frenchman laughs, all illusion is at an end. If foreigners act differently in their dramatic conceptions, it must not thence be concluded that the French have made for themselves rules useless to the art ; no, it is merely because dramatic writers of other countries have for auditors none but serious people. Why is the theatre more perfect in France than any where else ? From a very simple reason ; it is because, here laughter and epigram are
always

always awakened to revenge the attacks made on good sense, and foreign dramatists never meeting with those powerful correctors, their self-love is never exposed, and leaves the art, in that branch at least, *in statu quo*. Doubtless, the arts, in France, are greatly indebted to the genius of this astonishing people; taste in the arts owes a great deal to the playful and caustic influence of their habitual character. When blame assumes the smile of malice, what efforts must be made to attract the serious look of admiration! The French are the only people who have known the art of deriving from their very defects useful results.

It is not, however, all at once that they have reached this point of perfection in the dramatic art: they were under the necessity of performing a long novitiate before they arrived at Corneille and Moliere. For many centuries,

centuries, the priests, laid hold, in Europe, of the discovery of all the arts, in order to extend the empire of religion, and govern man in all his faculties. They, in like manner, seized on the first sparks of dramatic genius. Theatres were erected in the naves and under the porticoes of the churches; but the crowd, being too considerable, soon occasioned them to be removed to the public squares. Nothing more insipid, and at the same time more licentious, and even more sacrilegious, than the religious farces which were played on these infamous theatres. Every object of their most profound veneration; the mysteries the most respectable in their eyes; all the celestial hierarchy; the uncreated being that they designate by the title of God the Father, their immortal legislator whom they name God the Son; the Holy Ghost, the third extremity of this
mysterious

mysterious triangle ; all their court of archangels, angels, and seraphims ; all the legends of their saints, every thing, in short, that constitutes their religious creed, experienced the degrading honour of those species of sacerdotal solemnities, invented for impressing on the people greater respect for the very things which were thus disgraced with so much impudence. The coarsest, and not unfrequently the most obscene, language, was put into the mouth of the God of the universe and his retinue.

Three hundred years have elapsed since that period ; the progress of knowledge has been great. Nevertheless, wouldst thou believe that there are some districts in France where these farces, devoutly impious, are still acted ? In the remote part of Brittany, and at the extremity of Flanders, vestiges of them are still to be found. A person of veracity informed me that, not many
years

years ago, he saw one of these representations at Rosenthal near Dunki the common people themselves, with the actors. A theatre was erected, the open air, on casks ; old Berga tapestry formed the side scenes ; a prodigious number of tables, covered with viands of all sorts, and surrounded drinkers, composed the audience, the disposed to silence at this play. The representation began at eleven o'clock in the morning, and was ended at nine in the evening. There he saw pass in review all the Old Testament, from the creation of the world to the passion of Christ. By noon the performers were intoxicated ; Scribes and Pharisees began to fall with St. Peter ; the quarrel was no trifling one, and the guard was obliged to interfere, and call to reason apostles and disciples, nay Pilate himself, and worse, Magdalen, a fish-woman,

m

most loquacious that was heard. The whole troop beat each other, and made a terrible outcry: the holy women, in particular, played in this concert a very conspicuous part; at length they drank together and became pacified. The sacred drama was continued; but when the man who represented Christ, was laid in the tomb, he there fell so fast asleep, that the *coup de théâtre* of the resurrection could not take place. It was in the summer: fortunately a heavy shower of rain occurred; it dispersed both actors and spectators; but for this circumstance, no one knows when the revel would have ended. Within a few paces of this spot, on the same day and at the same hour, was performed the *Guèbres* of Voltaire. Dost thou conceive this? There was not a distance of six hundred toises between one theatre and the other; and there was an interval of six hundred years between the men.

At the origin of their theatre, they therefore began to admire the *mysteries*, which the priests supported with all their power; but, to employ their language, the unclean spirit interferes with every thing; profane subjects were introduced on the stage; and from that moment priests declaimed against comedy. Unfortunately, one of their kings, Henry II. assisted at the representation of the Cleopatra of Jodelle: the priests were then reduced to silence—the amusement of kings is a sacred thing. This Jodelle was well-informed; he had read the Greek authors; like them, he employed chorusses; he wished to imitate their simplicity, but was only cold and tiresome. Besides, what energy could be expected from a language which had scarcely emerged from barbarism? Next came Hardy and Garnier: the one rose but little above his master; the other remained

mained much below him. Their first tragic writer, therefore, was Duryer : the step was immense ; but why ? Because they were, at that time, just recovering from the direful calamities of civil war, a terrible, but ordinary period of all great conceptions. *Le Scévole* is still played ; then Mairet, then the emphatic Gombaud, then Rotrou, then Corneille ; and the beautiful was established. So much for tragedy. The progress of comedy was much the same till the time of their Moliere : he fixed the limits. Their Moliere and Corneille are two very extraordinary men ! How did the same century contain them ?

I have already told thee that these two fine species of drama engendered mixed kinds. Of this number, and in the first rank, are tragic opera and comic opera. The French are extremely inclined to advance that they

owe them to the progress of the art ; they dare not go so far ; they content themselves with saying that these kinds are the fruit of their admirable talent for varying their pleasures. This is an imposture which, perhaps, they do not suspect. Those species of dramatic representation prove only that they have had geniuses of the second rank ; geniuses jealous, despairing to arrive at real fame, and desirous to secure to themselves a reputation, the imperfection of which it was difficult to perceive. It is not only to the difficulty of attaining the sublimity of the two principal kinds, but also to the impossibility, for certain men, to follow the rules imposed on them, that the origin of these two species of opera must be attributed. Had not Richelieu and his lettered courtiers been envious, France would, perhaps, have had no opera : their strength did not correspond

respond with their hatred against Corneille ; they could not cope with him : they thought to disparage the nature of tragedy in order to create for themselves an immortal name ; they blended their poems with music : it exempted them from developments, and consequently they could write without feeling, and without sentiment—a great relief for persons of inferior mind. Rules were a restraint on them, and they borrowed the wand of the fairies in order to violate them at their ease! There it is, as they say here, that the tip of the ear is seen ; but how few people perceive it ! They also called in to their assistance dancing and theatrical pomp ; and so many auxiliaries did no more than attest the impotence of the creators. This great attack made on good taste, was concealed under the brilliant veil of novelty ; a sovereign always adored by the French. In a

word, not being able to make a good thing, they made a magnificent one. It is the statue of the sculptor: he was unable to make it handsome, but he made it rich. Their famous satirist, Boileau, put the finishing stroke to the business. Quinault had been sensible that some good might be derived from this mixed kind, and that a passable thing might be made of a bad one, by giving to the poems an elevation, a sentiment, a sort of amorous warmth, capable of ennobling it. Boileau levelled a satirical shaft at Quinault; and, among the French, an epigram is sufficient to annihilate merit: it is the grain of powder that blows up the rock.

After the death of Quinault, perhaps, the evil would not have been without a remedy, and some good genius might have been able to effect what he had only attempted: but
Boileau,

Boileau, without foreseeing it no doubt, (so true it is that the poet who sees in a sententious verse only the pleasure of making it, and the ephemeral applause that the happy assemblage of a few sonorous words will procure him; has not always the prudence to calculate the fatal influence which this verse may have on the opinion of posterity) the satirist, I say, who in speaking of lyric poetry, added

“ Que Lulli réchauffa des sons de sa musique,”

caused, by this verse, still at the present day in the mouth of every person, a mischief much more irreparable to the kind of opera. What has been the consequence ? For a hundred years past the musicians, who dare, however, plume themselves openly on this authority, nevertheless, act as if it was admitted : they all think themselves called on to give warmth to poems ;

the error, still continuing to increase also been strengthened by the more taste for Italian music ; to this decre the legislator of Parnassus the Italian musicians have superadded the content which, beyond the Alps, they have the absurd poems of their own country ; one error generally bringing its train a crowd of others, the precursors of dancing, in their turn, I imagined that they had a right to warmth also to that music, which its double crochets, was to give life to poetry ; in this manner, the poet in this branch is, in this theatrical representation, thrown back into the third rank whereas it is the poem, on the contrary, which alone ought to have right to give life to the music, and music to give life to the dancing : if all the arts flatter themselves with having a poetry, without which, in fact, they would be destitute of war-

or, to speak more correctly, they would be nothing, it is evident that, whenever poetry chooses to blend itself with them, it ought to hold the supreme rank, since the poetry peculiar to each art is no more than a branch of general poetry.

This inverse manner, so contrary to sound logic, and with which all the arts proceed to embellish this sort of spectacle ; I say all the arts, for the scene-painter has certainly the vanity to believe too that he gives warmth to something, and perhaps were the tailor even consulted, he would be found to entertain a similar opinion ; this manner, I say, would not be unlike the ashes which, placing themselves in the centre of the hearth, should push the coals to the exterior part of the chimney, and call themselves the principle of heat. This, however, is the false direction which

Boileau gave to an institution calculated for obtaining so much fame by the concurrence of all the arts, had he not displaced them by a brilliant verse, the origin of an idea so false in its consequences, if it were not false already when he published it. For it is allowable to doubt that the music of Lulli ever gave warmth to any thing; and might one not say to him as Leontine to Eudoxe ?

“ Voyez que de malheurs pour n'avoir su vous taire ! ”

Comic opera is to comedy what lyric opera is to tragedy ; but it has less nobleness, as to its origin ; for, in short, if the grand opera, as they call it, neither has the beauties nor the virtues of its parent, at least it is a legitimate offspring ; whereas comic opera, notwithstanding the tone which it assumes in order to give itself an air of relationship

lationship to Thalia, is, in fact, nothing more than a natural and clandestine son of the grand opera. If it has been fortunate, like all the children of its species, it must not thence be concluded that it is a child of love ; it is merely a capricious monkey. At one time it apes the laughter which its surname implies ; at another, it borrows from its parent tears and shields, with which it moistens and muffles up in a grotesque manner the rattle of Momus. The grand opera has imagined that the audience might suppose there were personages who expressed themselves only in singing : joy, pleasure, sadness, combats, death even, every thing is sung. Certainly no improbability or folly can be compared to this ; but, in short, a folly has appeared the *ne plus ultra* in which it might indulge. Its son has gone further : it has chosen that its person-

ages should speak and sing alternately; and in order to offend common sense the more, instead of charging speech to express passion, and intrusting to song what belongs to ornament only, it has intrusted passion to song, and reserved to speech nothing but phrases, always cold, which are employed in a poem for the purpose of connecting those passions with each other. Thus, for instance, if a personage wishes to express love, grief, anger, rage, or what not, he arrives, by means of spoken phrases, at the situation when the expression of those passions is necessary to him; there stopping suddenly, he introduces a long flourish of the orchestra between the moment when Nature points out to him the movement of the passion, and the moment when the caprice of the musician will permit him to pourtray it. When I was, for the first time, present

at

at the representation of one of these operas, I really thought that it owed its name of comic to this singular oddity ; and my error was the more excusable, as, in this comic opera, the actors fought, imprisoned each other, and committed devastation by fire and sword, and I saw nothing very comic in all those crimes.

Thou seest that both the grand opera and the comic opera are a degradation of the two fine species of tragedy and comedy. The *drame*, the *vaudeville*, and speaking pantomime, are also children of the same family, but children still more disinherited by reason. The *drame* is a composition of scenes of real life, or romantic adventures. Its personages are always mounted on stilts : in it a tradesman speaks like an academician ; a valet, like a philosopher ; and a cook, like a doctor of the Sorbonne. They consist

sist of treacherous friends, seduced girls, adulterous wives, and ruined fathers, and are interspersed with rapes, duels, and imprisonments ; in a word, I know not what. It exhibits the rather ignoble interior of some families of churchwardens, shopmen, artisans, workmen, or beggars, where crimes, which, thank God, are unknown to that class of men, have, according to the pleasure of the author, established their empire, and waged war against virtues of high descent, with which they are equally unacquainted. What labour ! wilt thou say. By no means ; the same receipt serves for all ; it is the pattern of the tailor : the dramatist takes a very extraordinary novel, overloads it with incidents : a foundling, a virgin deluded, an outlaw sheltered, or some other personage of that description ; these are the key-stones of the edifice. ..He surrounds them
with

with active rogues, indiscreet women, or revolted peasants; and increases this uproar by the falling of a bridge, the overflowing of a river, the burning of a house, a storm, a shipwreck, a forest and robbers. When the author is at a loss to make head or tail of all this, he has fortunately in reserve some tomb, from which he brings out a ghost, who, in that quality, knows the past, the present, and the future. The five acts are filled up; and in order to unravel the plot, he introduces some relation come from abroad, some nobleman, whose remorse make him an honest man, or some king met with at the chace, or some state messenger arrived by the diligence. At length the curtain drops, and all the Parisian cocknies, putting their handkerchief again into their pocket, exclaim: "My God, what talents!"

In other respects, the *drame* over-looks

looks nothing : all the details of the family are within its province ; and there lies the sublime. A servant-master is going to the cellar, a valet blowing out a lantern, in order to go to bed ; breakfast, dinner, supper, the cloth measured by the draper, the planing by the carpenter, the horse returning from plough, the old woman's cat, the farmer's dog, the sound of the bell, the pipe of the centine, all this has its place. Laugh if you dare ! you will involve yourself in a serious dispute with all the French KOTZEBUES.

And speaking pantomime ! O my dear Giafar, 'tis a *fine thing* ! speaking pantomime is the *drame* improved — what an effort of genius ! And, in fact, how is it possible to make the personages weep, groan, and rant, for three mortal hours ! What lungs could resist such exertion ! Music is the great, re—

source. If the author is exhausted in phrases, and the actor in strength, the orchestra strikes up; and all these performers who, just now, screamed loud enough to stun you, can no longer do any thing but gesticulate, and in such a manner as to make your heart bleed: the arms become the sole organ of speech, of sentiment, and of thought: how they bestir themselves! what *elegant* contortions! God knows whether the grave of St. Medar witnessed the like! And as pantomime is a great favourite of Terpsichore, it frequently happens that the legs are playing, when the arms are in despair, and that, in the music, which, in order to *approach* Nature, cannot but gain by a similar alliance, the bass laughs when the tenor is weeping.

These pieces of every description are played in houses more or less handsome, more or less commodious, more

or less illuminated, and it is by this last particular, above all, that you know the kind of company which frequent such a house. The disdain which the rich have for the poor, is remarked even in places devoted to amusement ; people find a pretext for this difference, from the admission to some public places being dearer than that to others. Thus, supposing that the theatres were devoted to morality, this proves only that morality is made an article of merchandize, and that there is some at all prices. If it is sold dearer to the rich, that does not imply that they consume more ; if it is sold cheaper to the poor, that does not prove that they have less need of it ; but through a consequence of that contradiction, which is generally enough to be remarked here in the most simple principles of reason, it happens that, in the different qualities of morality

rality which every evening are put up
 to auction, the best is constantly for
 the best educated, and the worst
 for those who have received less edu-
 cation; and it ought to be precisely
 the contrary. Thus, the same legisla-
 tion is followed in regard to the thea-
 tres as to the wine-vaults, where the
 best is for the rich, and the inferior
 sort of wine for the poor; and the go-
 vernment troubles itself no more about
 the disorders which the mind of the
 people contracts from this manner of
 quenching their thirst, than it does
 about those the germ of which is in-
 fused into their veins by the adulte-
 rated and deleterious wine they drink in
 the public-houses.

The scenery and decorations of the
 theatres, where these pieces are repre-
 sented, are generally handsome, and
 the illusion is now and then complete. It
 is affirmed that, within these fifty years,
 great

great improvements have been made in the former, as well as in the strict propriety of the dresses. It is true, that the principal actors attach a great importance to attiring themselves conformably to the time and place where happened the actions which they present; but the subaltern performers, less rich, are obliged to make use of warehouse dresses. This makes the strangest of contrasts. The illiterate warehousemen imagine that it is sufficient for a dress to have an antique form. Thus, by the side of a hero of Sparta gravely advances a Babylonian confident; thus the guard of a king of Assyria will have the uniform of consular lictors.

In comedy, the contrasts are not the same; the political revolution introduced one in dress: that of France of the present day bears resemblance whatever to that of France

French of former times. On the stage, a *petit-maitre*, for instance, when obliged, by his part, to appear alternately in an undress and in full dress, will successively wear the full dress of the old court, and the frock of the beaux of to-day; and, in this manner, he makes his dress, in the same piece, skip an interval of fifty years, without suspecting so absurd an anachronism. On the first theatre in Paris, I have seen, in one of Molière's pieces, the old men with the attire of the dotards of the time of Louis XIII.; their valets with the great coat and round wig, which they wore at the origin of the theatre; the first character with the embroidered suit, the head-dress, the bag, the feather, and the red heels of the age of Louis XV.; the women in the same dress as those who, the preceding evening, were present at Vauxhall; the young lover in a round hat, a frock, boots, and

and his hair cropped, *à la Titus*, like the youths of the day, and his valet with short jacket, &c. of a postillion. Thus, between the scolding father and the dissipated son, between the valet who carried on the intrigue, and the valet who brought a letter, there was only a little distance of two hundred years; and if this is somewhat singular, I saw something still more so—this was, that no one took notice of the circumstance.

In the scenery, the anachronisms are of a nature no less jocose: I have seen Brutus conqueror of the Tarquins in a magnificent palace, while, at the same period, his colleague Valerius inspired mistrust from the paltry abode he inhabited: I have seen Virginia, in the middle of a public square, surrounded by triumphal arches, temples of porphyry, and palaces with Corinthian pillars; whereas, five hundred
years

years after, Augustus boasted that he had found Rome of brick, and left it of marble ; I have seen the proud Agamemnon assassinated at the foot of a column which Callimachus invented only six hundred and forty years later ; I have seen Bayard give audience in bomb-proofs, for which we are indebted to Vauban ; and a thousand other incongruities of this species.

And all this among a people so jealous of the observance of propriety ! One is sorry that they respect it in so many particulars ; for, when they fail in it, one is then forced to attribute it to ignorance ; and ignorance, though she be covered with gold, roll along in a brilliant equipage, be embalmed with perfumes, conceal herself under the exterior of grace and beauty, lodge in a palace, have a splendid table, or walk surrounded by a numerous retinue, is not, on that account, less ignorance.

The

The Parisian will know wonderfully well the number of bows he ought to make on entering a room; he will judge without erring, what place of honour ought to be given at table; he will mark the shades of respect which ought to be shewn between such and such a magistrate; he will mention the hour when decorum will permit him to present himself at such and such a house; he will travel, with astonishing facility, through every degree of politeness with his friends, of civility with common acquaintances, and of attention with persons above or below him. In a theatrical representation the actors, forgetting the character the rank, and the dignity of the personages they are charged to perform will transgress, in his presence, those rules of propriety to which he is so much a slave, and with the hierarchy of which he is perfectly acquainted

He

He will see it with indifference ; what do I say ? He will not even suspect this forgetfulness. The most subaltern confident will come and speak familiarly to Semiramis ; a freed man will chat cheek-by-jowl with Augustus ; Condé will accost Vendôme without bowing to him, will take him without ceremony by the hand, and slap him jocosely on the shoulder ; a waiting-woman will burst out a-laughing in the presence of her mistress ; a valet will put on his hat before his master ; and the spectator, who, at the door of the theatre, has put between his lackey and himself so great an interval ; who, on the staircase, just before, has given way to a man in place ; who, in his box, rises with so much respect to offer his seat to his mistress ; and who is not even very certain whether his wife does not affect too much popularity, in suffering that her maid should be in the fourth

tier of boxes when she is in the first will see, without a frown, the actor on the stage, infringe all the rules of propriety of which he is himself so religious an observer. He will not fail to hiss a verse which may be deficient in taste, and he will never open his mouth to correct an actor who is deficient in good-breeding.

One day, I have been told, the famous Prévile was playing Cliton in the *Menteur*: this Cliton is the valet and this valet took the liberty of putting on his hat while speaking to Dorante. "That was the style of the old school," say they: therefore because the first actor who played the part has done a foolish thing, it is admitted, and all his successors will repeat it. A footman had introduced himself, I know not how, behind the scenes: this footman was not obliged to understand comedy, still less the

author-

authority of the old school : from his livery he took Préville for one of his brethren of the shoulder-knot ; he went up to him when he came off the stage : “ Zounds,” said he to him, “ you are devilish lucky, you have a “ d—n’d good-natured fellow of a master”——“ What do you mean ?”——“ Why, did I not see you, just now, “ speak to him with your hat on your “ head ? If I ventured to do as much “ in speaking to M. Le Comte, my “ shoulders would pay for it.” Was not this footman a better judge than the public ? After that, I understand, Préville never put on his hat again in playing the same character. But Préville was a man of good sense ; a common actor would have laughed at the simplicity of the footman.

LETTER X.

THOU wilt imagine, no doubt, that in the empire of the theatre, authors are in the first rank ; and actors in the second. This would be the case, were the empire of the theatre that of reason.

If a Frenchman can truly be taxed with buffoonery, if it be really wished to surprize him wantonly insulting good sense, and making a jest of being madder than the madmen confined at Charenton, it is necessary to examine how he reasons respecting comedians, it is necessary to examine how he proceeds with comedians ; and, lastly, it is necessary to examine how the comedians, on their side, reason and proceed in regard to the public.

The country where, perhaps, the profession of comedian would most deserve

serve to be honoured, would be France; and France is, of all countries, that in which this profession is most despised. Persons of fashion treat comedians as strolling players, and the common people call them buffoons or merry-andrews. Neither of them know what they say; strolling players nor merry-andrews no more signify comedian, than comedian signifies bishop. Before the revolution, the state of abjection into which comedians were plunged was extreme; though passionately fond of the amusements of the theatre, the French had accumulated every kind of infamy on the head of those who procured them those amusements. Religion denied them burial, the laws branded them with infamy, and custom banished them from society. A noble who should have turned lackey, would have disgraced himself; a noble who should have turned comedian, would have in-

science of the virtuous man respecting the consequences of that profession, it was likely to become the lot of men indifferent enough to disgrace, destitute enough of shame, strangers enough to their own esteem, to brave universal contempt : and where were they to be found, except among the beings either so separated from society by their obscurity, or so perverted by education, or so corrupted by vices, that they were come to regard, with a sufficiently contemptuous eye, general contempt to overstep the lowest degree of opprobrium, since, in short, the profession of comedian was considered as the *ne plus ultra* of debauchery ?

Who would have said to them : “ It
 “ is necessary, it is expedient that the
 “ master-pieces of Bossuet, Fénelon,
 “ and Massillon, should be at this day
 “ preached in your temples by men
 “ excommunicated by the church, cut
 “ off

“off from the body of citizens by the laws, and separated from honest people by their licentious conduct?” They would have cried out impiety: and yet where then is the difference? And has the moral less sanctity, has the lesson less value, for coming from the pen of Corneille, Molière, Racine, or Voltaire?

Philosophers have sought to explain the origin of this prepossession against comedians. Almost all of them have attributed it to the disorderly conduct of this class of men; but this is taking the effect for the cause. Where lies the fault? Is it not with those who shut that career against the well-bred, intelligent, and virtuous man? You have snatched from them religion, the protection of the laws, the want of integrity, fame even, which rewards virtues, whether public or private; you have chosen that the man, who, amongst you, enjoyed all those advantages,

tages, should forfeit them all at the very moment when he ascended the stage. If comedians are contemptible, it neither is owing to the defect of the profession in itself, nor to the vices of those who exercise it; they are contemptible merely because such was your pleasure. You have prohibited them the exercise of virtue, and you fatigue yourselves to find out why you despise them! But your research even is an excess of barbarism; your injustice is odious to such a degree, and you are so little aware of its consequences, that, if, perchance, a comedian, confined to the round of opprobrium with which you have encircled him, preserves those virtues of which you shew yourselves so proud, if he remains a good father, a good husband, a good son, a good friend, a good citizen, he is a hundred times greater than you.

Where then is the dishonour?

LETTER

LETTER XI.

I HAVE received thy letters. Thy astonishment increases, sayest thou, on the reception of mine. Thou dost not comprehend this extraordinary people: I believe it. For two years I see them, I observe them, I live with them, and I am still at a loss to comprehend them myself. No, Giafar, there is nothing romantic in my recitals; and yet I have, as it were, only painted to thee a few individuals, some families, a city, perhaps; what would it be then, were I to present to thee the picture of all the nation, of this nation, the greatest, the most heroic, the most generous, the most warlike, perhaps, that the world ever produced? What! wilt thou say, can that society of fickle, frivolous, inconsistent men..... This is a phenomenon, no doubt; but such a phenomenon exists.

exists. To consider the French individually, they are such as I have portrayed them ; but to view them as nation only, nothing equals them either in antiquity or among the people of modern times ; and those national virtues have been perpetuated for fifteen centuries without interruption without alteration, and even without diminution. Vanquished or victor conquerors or conquered, subject to wise kings, or bent under despotic monarchs, enlightened or ignorant, slave or free, whatever were the times, the circumstances, the reverses, the successes, the governments, from the moment when the question was for them to figure as a nation on the theatre of the world, majesty, greatness, loyalty, bravery, sincerity, frankness, disinterestedness, clemency, these are the characteristics of the French nation ! Look into their history, and judge. Individuals have been to blame

and the nation never. There is no nation that has not had a great national vice: Rome, pride; Carthage, treachery; Sparta, hatred; Athens, fickleness; all Greece, egotism; Egypt, credulity; Assyria, avarice; Persia, meanness; and so many others. Thence, for six thousand years past, the misfortunes of the world. Alone on the face of the earth, the French nation is still immaculate. It is impossible to find an age in which it has afflicted human nature by a national vice. With what can it be reproached? The crusades? They belong to Europe: the calamities of Charles VI.? They belong to the princes: the League? it belongs to particular men: the nation was never involved in it. But if virtues are necessary to make reparation, it arrives, it appears, it shews itself: how brave it is under Charles Martel! How great under
 Charle-

Charlemagne ! How zealous under the first Valois ! How generous under the sons of the Medici ! How nobly prodigal under Louis XIV. ! And all these virtues which it presents separately in each century, with what power, what authority, what energy it assembles them all in the war of the revolution ! What crimes in a few individuals ! But what virtues in the whole nation !

Thou askest me what were the causes of this revolution : this is, truly, another phenomenon ! How many questions have I asked ? They answer me, but none agree ; every one has his text. It has been favourable to many interests, and has destroyed many. How wouldst thou have them understand each other respecting these causes ? Every one determines them and explains them according to his affection. How will they write the history of this revolution ? I know not.

They

They call for a Tacitus; but though they had one Who on earth would have dared to give Tacitus the lie respecting the Cæsars? What man would have undertaken the defence of Tiberius, of Caligula, of Claudius, and of Nero? Tacitus wrote under the dictation of the universe. But here how write, when some will have every thing guilt in the results; and others, every thing virtue in the principles; and when, incessantly in contradiction respecting the causes and effects, they would always see in the most impartial history a part devoted to falsehood; since, in short, here an abuse is made of consequences to infect principles, and there a stand is made on principles to deny consequences?

How far are they, or I am deceived, from having dreamed of the real cause of the revolution! I have already told thee elsewhere, a word of what I thought
in

in this respect; this, perhaps, is the place to unfold to thee that idea.

Of these causes, there is a principal one, and some are secondary.

They seek the germ of this revolution near themselves: they are mistaken, in my opinion; it is in the origin of the monarchy.

And take notice that I say in the origin, and not in the principles, of the monarchy; for the object of this revolution having been civil liberty, that would be to advance that there can be no civil liberty in a monarchy, and that would be a paradox: the question here is not, to determine under what form of government civil liberty would have most guarantee, but simply on the fact.

Slavery may exist under a democracy, under an aristocracy, or under a monarchy: true liberty depends on the maintenance of the laws. Is
it

it the people by whom they are violated ? then there is tyranny in the people. Is it the men who govern ? there is despotism. To think one's self a slave, because but one man alone governs, is to think one's self blind because there is but one sun. Were this the case, there would then be for nations no other condition than slavery. In whatever manner you go to work, whatever varnish you employ to embellish theories, as soon as you reduce to practice any system of government, it is in vain to deny the fact, it is always one alone who governs. In democracy it is the most ingenious ; in aristocracy, the richest ; in monarchy, the most conspicuous. Passion may certainly dissemble to man this invariable order of Nature ; but how overthrow it ? Few or many magistrates, what does it signify ? The opinion of one alone always prevails :
 this

this power is not to be avoided. But it is not that which exposes liberty ; it is excess, wherever it be found, whether in the government or in the people. If I obey Cicero, I am free ; if Marius, I am worse than a slave : both, however, commanded in the name of liberty.

Why this revolution ? It must at length be mentioned. For fifteen hundred years two nations, very distinct, inhabit the territory of France ; a nation of victors, and a nation of vanquished : there is the grand cause. A complete mixture has never been effected ; the present epoch is the first moment when it is beginning to take place.

The Franks arrived in Gaul : they made themselves masters of it, established themselves there, and maintained their ground, but without expelling the Gauls. If they have mixed
by

by alliances, the paternal line is directly on the side of the Franks, for it was the Gauls who furnished the women. The Franks brought their asperity, their pride, their boldness, their fickleness, their wild fondness for domination, and their invincible inclination for licentiousness. The Gauls preserved their intrepidity, their bravery, their urbanity, their mildness, and their love for the arts. The latter owed their splendour to their long attachment to the Romans; the former, their renown to their profound hatred for them. They were therefore far from understanding each other respecting the character of true greatness. This was the first germ of division.

Authority became the lot of the victors: this was likely to be the case. Laws, government, employments, places, honours, all emanated from the Franks; and though history were not
to

to mention it, reason would alone suffice to suggest the idea, that it is not the vanquished whom the victor calls to share his power. Thus then, generally speaking, the Gauls became the people, and the Franks, privileged persons. They availed themselves of the right of conquest in its fullest extent: they effaced the ancient name of the country which they had subjugated: instead of Gaul, it was called France. The Gauls being placed in the class of the people, the Celtic names disappeared from history, which never records any thing but the actions of the powerful, and there the obscure names appear in abundance; the language is corrupted; the manners changed; and ignorance follows a people who cannot write: a contrast in the enjoyments of life between a people who esteem nothing but arms, and a people who not long ago still prided themselves

selves on their descent from .

Here is a second germ of division, and a terrible one nevertheless ; for the yoke, the most insupportable to man, is that which forces him to renounce his inclinations.

A Franc king governs ; I mean Clovis. He divides his empire between his sons ; it is Franks dividing Gaul between them. The great officers of their household, the governors of their provinces, the chiefs of their armies are Franks. It is not Gauls who rise to the rank of mayors of the palace ; it is also Franks. These mayors, in length of time, overthrow their masters, and form the second dynasty : that second dynasty is therefore likewise of Franc origin. Will it be the same with the third ? Yes ; for the honours granted, in the origin of conquest, to the first Franks, are become hereditary, and Hugh Capet is one of those lords. The very
name

nobles, of the magistrates in public solemnities, as well as in private life, in their speeches, in their harangues, in their ordinances, as well as in their confidential conversations? OUR BRAVE ANCESTORS, THE FRANCS. And what is very worthy of remark is, that never, no, never was it employed by the people. The reason is simple; it is the necessity of entertaining constantly in the mind of the people the terror originally inspired by the name of the conquerors. I will admit that, for some centuries, this species of formula was used more from habit than from sentiment; but what signifies that? It is the true vestige. OUR ANCESTORS, THE FRANCS! The Gauls have been remembered only since the revolution. Charlemagne, who possessed greatness of soul, and well knew the value of the people, wished to revive this name of Gauls; a vain wish which his

succes -

successors were not allowed to inherit.

The nobility founded their pretensions on the pride of blood : has this prejudice been properly investigated ? A man rendered illustrious by the exploits of his forefathers ! Has such an argument subsisted for ages ? When a pretension appears ridiculous, and still exists, we must, to form a judgment of it, divest ourselves of every prejudice ; for, in short, there is no pretension which, in its origin, has not had a motive, if a whole class of men adopted it. A man may certainly form a whimsical, uncivil, and inconsiderate pretension, because a man may be mad ; but this is not the case with a whole body. Examine well this pride of blood ; seize the clue, follow it, go back to the origin of the prejudice : where does it arise ? In the pride of victory. The expression, the

interpretation have been perverted ; but there is the principle ; and from that moment what seemed ridiculous, ceases to be so ; for the thing was founded on the reason of the conquerors. Will it be said that it was just ? Not in morality, but in policy ; how attenuate the reason of the conquerors ? “ Respect me,” said the nobles— “ Why ? ” — “ Because we are descended from the Franks, who, having been your conquerors, had a right to your homages, and we, being heirs to their conquests, have inherited the privileges which those conquests obtained for them.” This, no doubt, is founded on the right of the strongest ; people lament it ; but the absurdity of the pretension disappears ; and it is in this instance that knowledge ought to be blessed, because it serves to dissipate prejudices, and insensibly leads men to strip themselves

of

of pretensions arising from a barbarous reason.

But, will it be said, plebeians were ennobled, and they reasoned thus :
 “ Were those descendants of the
 “ Franks ? ” — “ Why not ? The Franc
 “ soldier was a plebeian also in fact,
 “ from the moment when the pride of
 “ conquest caused the equality acknow-
 “ ledged in the forests of Germany
 “ to disappear.” I am willing, how-
 ever, to admit that these ennobled ple-
 beians should be Gauls ; if they adopt
 the language of the Franks, what does
 that prove ? Nothing, except mean-
 ness and ambition, always apt to make
 a common cause with oppressors, in or-
 der to participate in the spoils.

The Catholic religion existed in Gaul prior to the arrival of the Franks. Its ministers had then a fine part to act ; perhaps they measured not all its extent. They enlightened not sufficient-

ly the victors respecting what they owed to the vanquished. They considered the circumstance more under a political point of view than under that of morality ; they sought a support in the new authority ; the honours they paid to the conquerors were only at the expence of the consolations which they owed to the people subdued ; and the principles of christian charity bent a little too much, perhaps, before necessity or ambition.

Thus, every thing that man is in the habit of respecting, religion, laws, authority, all concurred to preserve a very distinct shade between the Gauls and the Franks. Here then is found, from the outset, on the one hand, motives of pride and presumption ; on the other, a leaven of discontent and resentment. It is from the combination of these agents that, in the long run, political volcanoes are formed ; and
sooner

sooner or later the explosion takes place.

Certain persons have affirmed, that the People had more patriotism than the Great: they have imputed the weakness of this sentiment, in the latter, to riches, to the egotism which they produce, and to the corruption of which they are the cause; and in the former, they have attributed its preservation to the necessity of labour, to mediocrity of fortune, to less frequent occasions of disorder, and to the smaller number of factitious wants. Is there not a little sophistry in this definition? Would it not be more true to say that the people, being Gauls, ought naturally to cherish France more than that nation of Franks which resided wholly in the great or nobles? The people, being always Gauls, loved in France the primordial earth of their ancestors: the nobles, being always Franks, loved it

only as an adoptive country. It was in the forests of Germany that they had left the bones of their forefathers : they were then, in fact, deserters from the religion of the country. Fixed in Gaul, they had, in the enjoyment of their nobility, of their estates, of their distinctions, and of their honours, no more than a relative patriotism ; whereas the people, wholly Gauls, possessed really the patriotism of the land where slept the ashes of their ancestors. They had been subdued on their graves, but had not quitted them. Thus, the nobility had created for themselves a country which they agreed to consider as their own (if I may so express myself), while that country was a real one to the people. Thus, in the Revolution, it was necessary for the people, wholly Gauls, in order to find again the soil of the primitive country, to remove that hypothetical country with which
it

it had been covered by the Franks, or, to speak more correctly, the nobles. Thence that terrible struggle which has produced phenomena so novel, so extraordinary, so unheard of, that they have contradicted every political combination, every allowed probability, every received idea. The observer has attached himself only to the examination of the storms of the surface, and, being taken up by them, has not heard the interior storm which, for fifteen hundred years past, was brewing in the bowels of the state.

This is the great cause, the first and principal cause of the Revolution. But, before I exhibit to thee the secondary causes, let me be indulged in a reflection: it is that, having emerged from that crisis which the nature of this great historical fact rendered inevitable, the field, shall I call it, of hatred? begins to grow sterile for them. In

truth, what reproaches can the two parties or the two nations (not to depart from my system) now address to each other? Without coming to a right understanding respecting the species of their motives, since time had effaced the respective titles, introduced a confusion of ideas, and substituted prejudices in the place of rights, it is not the less true, that both of them acted through a natural impulse; the one claimed a country; the other defended a conquest. To know whether, in this great contest, justice has determined, we must go back to the time of the arrival of the Franks in Gaul; and if, since that epoch, the oppressive system of the right of conquest has been perpetuated till our days, will it be said that justice has swerved in replacing the people conquered in their ancient place? Will it be said that she was rigorous in giving a country
to

to those who had but a conquest? Will it be said that she was barbarous, in replacing by a fraternal adoption an adoption originally snatched by violence, cemented by blood, and consolidated by a yoke of fourteen hundred years? To consider it rightly, the Gauls of 1789 have spoken only to reason, and the Franks ought to reply only by equity. Let us, in idea, displace events; let us for a moment throw back the reciprocal pretensions, which clashed during the Revolution, to the period when the Franks penetrated into Gaul; let us strip the Franks of the paradoxes which the long abuse of an usurped authority caused to militate for them, and the Gauls of effervescence, the inevitable consequence of the loss of a patience too long tried; let us suppose them to possess reciprocally the knowledge with which they are now endued, and let us place them

at that epoch, in the position in which they are at present, relatively to each other : what would remain at the issue of such a struggle ? Frankness, cordiality, and hospitality, on one side ; on the other, loyalty, admiration, and gratitude. Because one party endured, and the other for a long time abused their power, are these reasons for enmity ? But to return to the main subject.

Whenever a man of genius reigned over the French, it is to be remarked that he was on good terms with the people : it is because the philosophy of reason is inseparable from genius, and embraces the power of the rights of all, before it considers the rights of one alone. Thus Charlemagne revived for a moment the national assemblies ; thus Louis IX. employed himself on laws truly popular ; thus Louis the Fair had the parent idea of the States-general ;

general; but they elevated the people without lowering the great. In a spirit directly opposite, the kings, the most signalized by their despotism, were strongly bent on the abasement of the nobles, not through love for the people, but from jealousy of power. Thus Louis XI. crushed the feudal government; thus Louis XIII. availed himself of Richelieu for compressing the authority of the great by the terror of scaffolds; thus Louis XIV. completed the subjugation of them, in rendering them effeminate by the show and the amusements of his court. But, whatever may be the contrast of two lines of policy so opposite, it is very true that the effect was the same, since some of the kings, by being on good terms with the people, preserved in them the remembrance of the rank which they ought to hold in the state, and others, by lowering the great, em-

boldened the people to consider them under their real point of view. Thus all of them, notwithstanding the extreme difference of their systems, concurred, without their knowledge, no doubt, but through the very power of things, to fasten constantly the links of that chain of leading principles of the Revolution, which is connected with the origin of the monarchy.

“ Knowledge,” say they, “ paved the way to the Revolution, and brought it about.” Very well : but ignorance also paved the way to it. When the great, illiterate to such a degree as to pride themselves even on not knowing how to sign their name, no longer thought the profession of arms worthy of esteem ; they disdained to stoop to judicial administration, which they had till then exercised. The feeble knowledge of the time was, in this manner, confined to a few men of the
class

class of the people, and it was from the latter that the tribunals were supplied with magistrates. The great, not content with despising instruction and the people, committed likewise the fault of involving in this twofold contempt the new organs of the laws. What consequence was derived from this by the people, who seldom appreciate motives? They saw, in the contempt of the great for magistrates, nothing but contempt for justice itself, and their aversion for them was increased. The kings, whose false policy saw in this disposition of men's minds nothing more than an additional mean of undermining that feudal power, by which their own was eclipsed, encouraged this order of things, and were not aware that they were creating only a party of opposition. For the very reason that the parliaments, become sedentary, were composed of
men

men drawn from the class for a long time stiled in France the *tiers-état* (the third estate), they thought themselves called on to represent the people; and through this pretension, chimerical in itself, since they held not their powers from the nation, they, nevertheless, entertained the people in that idea, founded in justice, that they ought to be represented. Now, whether did that idea lead the people, except to measure the royal power, and to assign to it limits? From that moment a balance was established: once established, it was unavoidable that each should endeavour to make it incline on his own side. What means would kings employ? Corruption or tyranny; and the people? Insubordination and insurrection. When any nation whatever is arrived at such a pitch as to be convinced that the great men of the state despise justice, and
think

think themselves above the laws, and that there are in the royal authority points which they may contest, and which, consequently, present themselves as contrary to natural rights, sooner or later an explosion must happen ; for, from that moment, every pretension in the great will appear arbitrary to the people, and every will in the kings will seem to them usurpation. Thus, every thing that they choose to suffer, they will place to the account of a complaisant patience, and never to that of reasonable obedience, and when they renounce this patience, every burst of passion will appear to them justice, every excess will seem to them to accelerate the return of their rights, and there will be a terrible commotion. It is not, therefore, merely to knowledge that the Revolution ought to be attributed, but also to the profound ignorance to which the great abandoned themselves.

To

To these secondary causes must be added the civil wars, the birth of the reformed religion, and the discovery of the New World.

Let the League be stripped of the execrable character which it received from religious fanaticism, and the secret and political ambition of the House of Lorraine, whose hand, for a long time invisible, fabricated and directed the springs of it, what remains to the eyes of the philosophical observer? A spontaneous movement in the people towards liberty: an unskilful, inconsiderate, and even senseless movement, but which enabled them to ascertain their strength. If a parallel be drawn between the League and certain periods of the Revolution, it will be seen that the monks, in that immense combustion, acted the same part as that of the men who, in these latter times, were denominated in France *terrorists*; that the Guises of 1589, and
a few

a few factious chiefs of 1798, were the same thing ; that the *sixteen* of the League and the *revolutionary committees* were guided by the same spirit ; that the day of the *barricadoes* and the *thirty-first of May* are perfectly alike ; that the maledictions hurled from the pulpits against Henry III., and those of the *commune* against the Convention are, word for word, the same. But if the League and the Revolution have so many points of contact, and many others too which I do not mention ; if, in both periods, a few factious persons bewildered the people in the name of liberty, because the criminal passions of certain individuals are developed, and will constantly be developed in the same manner in these great commotions, the *dénouement* of the League and of the Revolution have been different, because the principles have not resembled each other : every thing

thing being criminal in the principles of the League, the principles concurred with the crimes of individuals. In the Revolution, on the contrary, every thing being liberal in the principles, the principles made a resistance to the crimes of the factious.

Thus, the League, from the nature of its principles, could have no other end but an odious slavery, and this would have happened with any other king than Henry IV. ; whereas the Revolution, from the nature of its principles, could not but have a *dénouement* in which the lot of the people has been improved, and in which it has acquired, not what chimerical theories always promise inconsiderately, but at least a liberty more extensive, better understood, and the advantages of a government in which their interests and dignity are more respected. France received a great lesson from the League.

That

That League being overthrown, the Revolution had only been adjourned. By the flight of Henry III. the people had learned that they could make kings tremble ; by the conduct of the monks, that the interests of the church were not theirs ; by the caresses of the Guises, that the instigators of insurrections aspired almost all to tyranny ; in short, by the conduct of Henry IV., that one is not always certain of meeting with such a monarch at the issue of a great revolutionary crisis. Thus, in the last Revolution, the remembrance of the timid flight of Henry III., and of what followed, had more influence than is imagined on the fate of royalty ; the conduct of the monks, during the League, on the suppression of the convents ; the experience of what the Guises had dared, on the catastrophe of the Duke of Orleans ; and so on with the rest.

But

But if the inevitable and ill success of the League, if the incalculable horrors of which it had been the cause and the pretext, had taught the French to reflect, new religious opinions had introduced into society a spirit of inquiry, discussion, and analysis, till then unknown. The numerous writings of the protestants, almost all strong in logic, stripped of the obscurity and subtilties of the schools, addressing themselves at once to reason, to wisdom, and to humanity, composed, besides, with a clearness and a purity of style extraordinary for those times, and which is scarcely to be found since, except in those of the anchorites of Port Royal, the great and venerable philosophers of catholicism; those writings, I say, began the moral Revolution; they introduced a salutary scepticism; not a scepticism which was likely to lead to incredulity and atheism, as in-

sincerity

sincerity affirmed and still affirms, but to the non-belief of the errors accredited by the interest of some men. That interest being alarmed, cried out from the first that God was attacked : reason, exempt from passions, soon acknowledged that the contest was waged against men only who wished to make of their cause the cause of God ; and far from this scepticism introducing atheism, it was the cradle of that philosophy, the defenders of which, in France and in Europe, were at all times, and at this day more than ever perhaps, more religious, more confident in the Divinity, more obedient to his eternal laws and to his providence, than their antagonists, than those anti-philosophers, who may well be called the sole, the real atheists, since they consider themselves alone, and God is to them no more than a pretext. The more, writings and replies were increased,

creased, the more that truth became palpable, the more evident were the motives of the support which the spiritual and temporal powers lent to each other. The creed was purified by those even who were accused of wishing to annihilate all belief ; new political and moral ideas took birth ; ages of knowledge were prepared ; and obedience to legitimate authorities, more noble, because it became more free, and more immediate from the enlightened will of man, assumed a character more august and more sacred.

But while the various trials of the League spread in society the philosophy of experience, and the progress of protestantism diffused in writings the philosophy of reasoning, the discovery of the New World added to these victorious lessons others no less striking. If thou readest with some degree of attention, Giafar, the history of the different

erent nations of Europe, which I have caused to be transcribed into our language for the purpose of sending it to thee, thou wilt judge of this great event : a formidable event, in fact, in which two worlds, meeting all at once, presented to each other, as the first pledge of their alliance, the one executioners to put people to death, and the other, gold to poison their mind ; and attempted in vain to conceal from the eyes of human nature, under the mask of commerce, the odious pages of their compact, written with the blood of one world, and the tears of the other.

Religious fanaticism, which commits murder to make converts, will find sectaries : thus wills human exaltation ; but religious fanaticism, which assassinates only to enrich itself, meets with none but implacable judges ; and the event has proved it. The eloquent indignation of Demosthenes was less fatal

fatal to Philip than the eloquent tolerance of Las Casas was to catholicism— O immense depth of the wisdom of God! which allowed that, in a whole century, there should be found but one single man bold enough to console the world, in order to prove that, when he pleases, the weakest reed is sufficient for him to break all the colossuses of religions of blood! But compassionate pity also enchants with its romances the flexible imagination of mankind. The heart of Frenchmen, more apt to be inflamed, more susceptible of being softened, took a pleasure in following in idea that good and immortal Las Casas among the wandering remains of those nations mutilated by the Castalian sword; it went with him to seek for them in the gloomy thickness of deep forests, over the immense extent of deserted mountains, in the valleys shaded by the sides of the towering Andes.

Andes. Thence, all the flattering dreams of savage life, all the falsehoods of the sweets of the state of nature, all the chimerical theories of societies without laws, of perfect equality, of liberty without a regulator; sweet illusions with which inexperience deceives itself, which innocence of heart approves, which the knowledge of men changes, which reflection weakens, and reason dissipates. But these fables have a moral: it alone remains; and its work is recognized by the sentiment of the dignity of our being, by the birth of every liberal thought, and by the rational love of a moderated liberty.

Such was the progress of men's minds, when the reign of their Louis XIV. arrived; an astonishing reign! a reign of glory! the eternal object of the admiration of all Frenchmen, and of the hypocritical regret of the anti-philosophers! The latter ought rather

to curse it : that age to which they pretend to be so partial, which they exalt so much, in order to persuade simple persons that all is great wherever philosophy does not penetrate; that age is, nevertheless, one whose influence accelerated most the plenitude and triumph of philosophy. In a republic grown old, that is to say, in a state where the noble love of the country is become lukewarm, where the generous sentiments which true republican principles for a long time inspire, are beginning to be effaced (and when I say principles, knit not your brow, credulous citizen ! disdainful and inconsiderate woman ! petty potentate of the counting-house and shop, without instruction and without knowledge ! frivolous, senseless, young man, without experience, without reading, and without acquirements. All you whom a set of miscreants, gorged with blood
and

and rapine, made believe so easily that they were republicans ! All you who took for the government of liberty every thing that is cursed, every thing that is abhorred, every thing that is execrated by the friends of liberty ! All you who, at the end of two lustres of outrages and crimes, owe the repose that you are beginning to enjoy only to those republican principles which, under a vigorous government, are at length disengaged from the darkness with which so many monsters covered them ! All you who, always the dupes of miscreants as well of impostors, now open your ears only to a few sorry quacks, the eternal detractors of that republic whose benefits are repairing your misfortunes, and of that philosophy without which you would neither have that religion whose morality consoles you, nor that peace whose presence gives you confidence, nor those

laws whose power preserves for you that liberty, the name of which alone excites your absurd disdain, when you frequently employ its rights with so much insolence, nor that political and religious toleration which every day forgives you either your anti-civic ingratitude, or your hypocritical impiety) ; in a republic grown old, I say, if enthusiasm for the arts is manifested, tremble ; for then enthusiasm for virtues will be dissipated ; and it will be a new aliment which will be sought by hearts destitute of energy ; thence, perhaps, there will be one step only to slavery. But on the contrary, if slavery is ancient, the spontaneous awakening of talents of every description is the symptom of an approaching exaltation. Under Louis XIV. eloquence, poetry, history, painting, sculpture, architecture, abstracted mathematical, political, and moral sciences, every thing sprang up
at

at once, and every thing sprang up sublime ; but every thing was consecrated to one single man. However, it is in vain that he is a king ; such a flight is a commotion ; to no purpose would it be denied ; the mass of society is jealous : each member of that society will try to restore clandestinely to the country that which adulation ascribes but to one single man, because then every person will think he participates in the splendour of such a period. This impulse towards patriotism is not generous perhaps ; but then is the logic of innate pride nothing in all mankind ?

Let the French reflect : did this sudden appearance of every description of talents under Louis XIV. prevent the most bloody and the most unjust wars from being frequently undertaken ? Did it prevent the husbandmen from being snatched from the plough, the

workmen from the manufactories, the tradesmen from their counting-houses, children from their families? Did it prevent imposts from rising in a frightful progression, fanaticism from continuing its ravages, three hundred thousand protestants from carrying their industry to foreign countries, hypocrisy from erecting itself into a system? Did it prevent a triumphant king from being humbled by all Europe, his laurels from being faded by puerile resentments, his justice from being disgraced by sanguinary edicts, his old age from being dishonoured by an improper marriage? Did it prevent complaints from being imputed to guilt, murmurs from being construed into rebellion, despotism from becoming the sole reason of state, and wretchedness from being the lot of all? Age of Louis XIV. age of the arts! who ever separated from the idea of the splendour of the arts the idea of public
prospe-

prosperity ! If they belied this result, their direction was then false ; and it was so, for they ought to turn to the prosperity of the state, and not to render a man illustrious. And what can be objected to the philosophers who should say : “ You see the little good “ which they have, at that time, done “ to France ; see that which they “ might have done ? ” These philosophers have said it ; and where is the crime of having said it ? Where is the crime of having listened to it ? Enemies of philosophy, you wish for greatness without it, for prosperity without it, a people to be happy without it : you had so fine an opportunity ! Why did you not then perform your promises ? Is it its fault, if this reign of Louis XIV. has given you the lie in so cruel a manner ? Why did you not give philosophy to that reign, you would not then have had a Revolution ?

But see, Giafar, the horrible *dénouement* of an age of glory without philosophy ! see France under the regent ! What an assemblage of meanness, opprobrium, and vices of every kind ! What now remains of the eloquence of Bossuet, of the morality of Fénelon, of the majesty of the theatre, of the language of Boileau ? Indifference for every production of genius ! fondness for epigrams and a play on words ; libertinism of mind, scarcely to be compared to physical libertinism ; Voltaire in the Bastille ; Massillon without auditors, and St. Simon without influence. In time bigotry succeeds to the most disgusting impiety ; to extreme wretchedness, the most credulous and most sordid covetousness ; to apparent greatness of plans, the most pitiful inconsistency ; to exaggerated pride of ranks, confusion of all orders ; to the most affected rigidity, the
most

most unbridled debauchery : every tie is loosened, every propriety violated, every decency banished, every fortune displaced. Where is that age of Louis XIV. ? It has scarcely passed, and every thing has crumbled away, every thing has disappeared. What hand will collect its remains ? Then do not calumniate philosophy which assembles them in silence : far from accusing it, bless it, on the contrary, for having, in judging of these remains, discovered in that which a nation durst for one single man what it might dare for itself.

And this is what philosophy did during the reign of Louis XV. ! The French nation disengaged itself by degrees from the shameful yoke of all the vices which, from policy, perhaps, the regent had imposed on it. Licentiousness, the inevitable consequence of the joy with which it was inspired when

death released it from the iron sceptre of Louis XIV., at length disappeared. The battle of Fontenoy restored the French to military glory, their favourite passion. Great writers again made their appearance, but with different colours : to write for a king or for men, the shade cannot be the same. The war against prejudices began ; they were pursued on the stage, at the bar, in the fashionable circles, in the silence of the cabinet : ridicule, so powerful in France, delivered them up to public laughter, and men's eyes were opened. Knowledge found its way into all professions, it enlightened the clergy in regard to the dependence in which it was held by the prelates ; the simple nobles respecting the exaggerated pretensions of the great lords ; the citizens respecting the abasement to which they had been reduced by the privileged orders ; the common people respecting the

the insignificance to which they had been condemned ; and thus the Revolution happened. It was inevitable ; thou hast just seen the reason. But this Revolution took place by explosion, and unfortunately this could not be avoided ; to prevent this, it would have been necessary to foresee that those whose interests were diametrically opposite to every pacific revolution, would accelerate with all their power this great commotion, in order to render it so terrible, so fatal, so dreadful, that they might profit by the general fright, to say to the multitude, ever easy to be deceived : “ You see whither “ those men, whom you thought so “ wise, have led you.” An inconceivable Machiavelism, but which, nevertheless, has existed. It would have been necessary to make the Revolution for the people, but without the people : to render them the great

revolutionary agents, was to deliver them up to their enemies. Why did not so simple a reflection then strike so many men of sound minds? Why did they not consider that a revolted people no longer listen to prudence, and that, in their tempestuous days, he in whom they shall place the most confidence, will be the man that will render them the least service? Ah! my dear Giafar, to cause the people to revolt in order to conquer their liberty, is to give a fine scope to the oppressors of liberty! Philosophy proceeds not in this manner. And those who complain of the Revolution accuse philosophy! It is difficult to be more blind or more insincere: to accuse philosophy of that which paralyzed philosophy! How pitiful! General recapitulation: the principle of the Revolution was in the conquest of Gaul by the Franks; its necessity was in the elements

elements of society, divided into victors and vanquished. Philosophy unfolded the germ of it ; but who carried it into execution ? It was much less the work of genius than of character : thence many evils ; but what lessons for future nations !

ties of diplomacy were broken ; nor even (it must be mentioned) its different legislatures ; being an unheard-of mixture of sublimity and weakness, they did great things, and committed great faults ; and yet it sees itself at this day in a situation which its pride formerly could neither have reasonably foreseen nor expected. Where then shall we find the causes of this phenomenon ? In its principles, in its bravery, in its national character, and in the extraordinary man whose genius has found means to regulate the first, direct the second, and discover the third.

To regulate the first ! Yes, no doubt ; it must not be dissembled that, at the origin of the Revolution, the people, whose mind is upright, but whose conduct is never governed by the rules of logic, were struck by the liberality of principles, but made a false application of them. A better prospect
was

was held out to them, and they took the hope of enjoying it for the enjoyment itself. Patriots spoke to them of recovering their rights, and they caused conquest to be preceded by the enthusiasm of victory ; of liberty, and they thought themselves free, because they rattled in a noisy manner the chains of licentiousness ; of fraternity, and they abandoned themselves to all the effusion of fraternal confidence before they had extinguished family hatred ; of abuses, and they took for their destruction the necessity of destroying them. They attached the wisdom of laws, not to their spirit but to their novelty ; they took equality for the right of having no equals ; they received with rapture a constitution, as a young man takes a mistress whom he adores one day, and forgets the next. Being the inconsiderate sport of every illusion, they answered in this way the call

call of every impostor, and plunged themselves into such a state of intoxication, that they snatched from philosophy the authority of saying to them : “ *You are bewildering yourselves ;*” and gave to their enemies the power of repeating to them incessantly : “ *You are not going far enough.*” In a word, as soon as the people were sovereigns, they played the part of a king. They were deaf to truth, and all ears for flattery.

This was the origin of their misfortunes. But by the side of them is, in like manner, to be found the origin of their greatness. A false application of principles destroys not the truth of those very principles. Civil and private liberty, a better order of things, a government more paternal, a peaceable enjoyment of ideas and property, such were the articles of the compact which the people had made with the Revolution.



tion. They might well go astray in the career to be followed in order to arrive at those advantages ; but, in mistaking their road, it was not so easy to divert them from the object of their journey ; and, amidst their numerous wanderings, they attached to it all their thoughts. Thence their astonishing patience during their long misfortunes, their inexhaustible generosity in sacrifices of every kind, their unheard of heroism in the field, and at the same time, that inconceivable confidence in the fallacious promises of all the factions, that incredible mixture of licentious effervescence and blind submission in the interior : thence, in short, that spectacle, truly extraordinary, of a people docile, in fact, to the voice of so many opposite parties, which meditated only their slavery and ruin, and nevertheless advancing, with obstinacy, towards the object which they wished to

to attain, and incessantly disconcerting their enemies, for the very reason that they made them the instruments of their projects. Thus the result of events has classed every thing in proper order : the disgrace of crimes falls again on those whom an inordinate ambition rendered guilty, and the honour of virtues returns to the mass of the French nation, the purity of whose intention is justified by its present situation.

By dint of interrogating them respecting the motives of the agitations to which they have been a prey for the last twelve years, I have thought I remarked, that of all the monsters engendered by the factions, the most cruel, the most ungovernable, that, in short, which most prolonged the revolutionary storms, was Calumny : it might be said that a malignant and invisible demon had taken a pleasure in realizing
the

the picture drawn of it by one of their poets, Beaumarchais. From the first dawn of the Revolution, the people were calumniated to the government, the latter to the people, both of them to the States-General, and the States-General again to them. In calumny originated the hostile preparations of the court, and the first excesses committed in the provinces on country mansions and property. Calumny determined the movements of the 5th and 6th of October, presided over the verdict of the men of those days, poisoned the steps of the King in regard to the capital, perverted the conduct of the Mayor of Paris, and paved the way to the same fate which attended them both. Calumny suggested emigration, and hastened the promulgation of the laws against emigrants. The French nation was calumniated to foreign powers,

ers, and the latter to the French nation ; and thence war ensued.

Calumny armed the Convention against the Convention ; it dictated the proscriptions of the 31st of May ; it erected the scaffolds previously to the 9th of Thermidor (28th of July) ; after the 9th of Thermidor it sharpened the daggers. It was calumny that brought the parties in presence of each other on the 13th of Vendemiaire (5th of October) : it soon separated the Directory from the two Councils : it kept up that fatal struggle which was likely to end in the fall both of the former and of the latter. How earnestly did it not again strive to exercise its power on the 18th of Brumaire (9th of November) ! And if, since, it was more circumspect in its treachery, it must not, on that account, be thought stifled. And how many worthy friends of the
country

untry and of the government does it
 t take a pleasure, perhaps, in keep-
 g remote from public employments !
 and how many has it not stripped of
 e reward of their services ! In short,
 r the last twelve years, calumny in
 vance has fascinated every imagina-
 on, confounded every idea, bewilder-
 every wish, and perverted every ac-
 on : it might be said that Hell placed
 by the side of the Revolution, in or-
 er to present it to different characters
 nder different masks, always prepared
 its malice ; to good men, under the
 ask of ingratitude ; to the timid, un-
 er that of terror ; to the wicked, un-
 er that of fortune. It has always
 laced itself between the Revolution
 and mankind, in order to prevent them
 om coming to a right understanding.
 and, in a word, as the last master-
 iece of its execrable power, calumny
 as almost succeeded in rendering the
 Revo-

Revolution responsible for all the mischief it has done to the Revolution.

From this rapid sketch, it is easy for you to conceive, Giafar, that, notwithstanding the excellence of principles, bravery, and character, as long as the factions, clashing and alternately overthrowing each other, kept calumny in their pay, it was impossible that the national will should not be incessantly led astray, and that liberty, the constant pretext of so many excesses, should not always remain unknown to the people, whether it was sought after, or attacked, or defended, whether it was compressed or revenged, since, according to the policy common to all the factions, while each of them pretended to profess a profound zeal for the liberty of all, they acted, in fact, only for the liberty of some; and what species of liberty? the liberty of ruling.

If kings took up arms to re-erect the
throne,

throne, they had in view, by their own account, no other object but the liberty of France. If the emigrants went to increase the enemy's battalions, it was, in their opinion, to reconquer liberty for the people. If demagogues broke all the ties of subordination, morality, and civil duties, it was, to believe their assertions, in order to give to liberty all its latitude. If democracy alternately extended its power to all, it was to strengthen liberty by the very rapidity of the passage of authority through every hand. If aristocracy wished to unite this authority in the hands of some, it was in order that general liberty might be secure under the shadow of a tutelar and paternal protection. Thus, when so many parties, moved by interests so contrary, nevertheless were agreed in this point of speaking only in the name of liber-

ty, how could the national intention but be always wavering respecting the choice of so many forms of government, constantly presented, by their trusty contrivers, under the allurements of liberty? • And how could it form a clear and precise idea of the real nature of a just and reasonable liberty, when it heard each faction cry down with fury the liberty preached up by its antagonists, much in the same manner as empirics rail at the secrets or remedies of their rivals?

The national intention could not therefore assume a sort of rectitude till the moment when the factions, reduced to silence, should cease to torment it by the perpetual contrast of their chimerical theories, and of their promises ever brilliant, and never performed; till the period when peace
should

should deliver it from the secret manœuvres of foreign foes, constantly corrupting the public mind, and from the weariness of war, the most fatal effect of which, no doubt, is almost always to make nations embrace the course that suits them the least. It cannot be dissembled ; the 18th of Brumaire (9th of November) has given birth to that happy moment ; good has been effected, because, for the first time since the Revolution, the purity of the national intention has been found to accord with the intention of the governing power ; because, for the first time, the genius of an extraordinary nation has (if I may venture to use the expression) been found to be in unison with the genius of an extraordinary man ; and because, by the happy harmony of greatness and confidence on one side, and of greatness and loyalty on the other, advancing in concert towards

220 LETTERS OF A MAMELUKE.

a welfare stripped of all spirit of system, every thing has been successful through common efforts, every thing has been great in general results.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

THE French are, methinks, familiar with death. They brave it in battle, they brave it for their country, to preserve their mistress, to save their fellow-creature : this is virtue. They deal it out or receive it for an injury : this is prejudice. In short, they are not moved by the sight of funeral obsequies : this is a vicious custom. Whether the cradle and the coffin cross each other at the door of the temples ; whether, under the same arches, the yellow torches of funerals smoke, or the perfumed tapers of the God of Marriage shine, it is all the same to a Frenchman ; these comparisons escape him : no astonishment, no reflection, no self-examination. Hackney-coaches, diligences, stage-waggons, superb coaches, disgusting

L 3

dung-

dung-carts, cars of love, funereal cars, files of soldiers, processions of mourners, droves of oxen, flocks of sheep, crowds of men, all go, come, meet, mix, push each other, quarrel, get entangled, and separate.

What are here the last adieux paid to the dead? If it is the obsequies of the rich, epigram; of the poor, indifference; and of philosophers, not a word.

Why? It is because etiquette has extinguished sentiment. A person communicates his marriage, the birth of his children, or the death of his parents to his relations, to his friends, to his acquaintances, and to those even of whom he has scarcely any knowledge. What shades in the regret or satisfaction of these different persons! But there is none in the style of announcing the event; the form is the same towards the dearest friend, and
towards

towards the man with whom the most distant connexion exists. Sentiment created custom, empty pride lavished it : what has been the consequence ? The heart, being come to such a state as to take no share in the politeness shewn, takes no share in the politeness received ; the cordial communication of happiness or sorrow is become a mere duty of society ; people have ceased to trouble themselves how and towards whom they discharge it, provided it be discharged ; duty has been acknowledged only by duty ; the form being the same for the friend or the indifferent person ; the indifferent person and the friend shew the same face in the expression of their sensibility, with respect to the event which is communicated to them : thus, for instance, a man assists at a funeral as he pays a visit of ceremony. Do not imagine that, when a Frenchman is rich,

he even condescends to take the trouble of informing his acquaintances himself of the favours of Hymen, or the injuries of Death ; it is the business of a printer to proclaim his joy or his concern ; it is that of the servants to furnish him with the list of the friends of their master. Ball or funeral, the same thing ; sports or tears, grimace ; show, the sole object. It is neither to mourn nor to amuse himself that he assembles his friends ; the important point is not to make himself interesting to a great many friends, but to display a great many. In a *fête*, he makes a parade of the number of his acquaintances as he makes a parade of his furniture ; in funeral ceremonies, he makes a display of friends as he does of black hangings ; in the one, he is desirous only to fill his spacious apartments ; in the other, to fill the mourning coaches. See then what a frozen indifference in
this

this long retinue ! what impassable coldness in the mournful psalm-singing of the priests ! Routine alone invokes the mercies of God. Behold the priests ! they consume prayers as the idle man consumes his time ; and those subaltern funerals ! See them lift up that coffin ! Is it in equilibrio with the expence ? Pomp, however, accompanies the procession : seek not there affecting regret, afflicted friendship, timid prayers ; gravity is only in the arrangement, melancholy only in the colours, and mourning only in the dresses. Vanity, Interest, and Pride, those are the undertakers ; and all is passion in the suite of a dead man whom at the very instant God judges, perhaps, by the abuse of the passions. Unfortunate man, to die in the midst of so many men, without one friend to close thy eyes ! Hadst thou not then a dog ? Let it be suffered to ap-

proach at least ; let there be a being in Nature that mourns at thy obsequies !

I was once present, Giafar, at one of these pompous funerals. On coming out of the temple, the master of the ceremonies placed me in one of the carriages in the procession. I shall never forget the conversation of my two companions—" Ah ! good morning, Dermance : you are here."—" I bowed to you ; I was at a distance ; you did not perceive me."—" Indeed ! you delight me. I was mortally afraid of seeing"—" What ! your sight is"—" Detestable. Do people see ? Sir, will you be so good as to draw up that glass ? It is extremely cold ! Upon my word, that church is—two long hours ? Winter and wearisomeness, 'tis a great deal too much for a funeral. He's a Mameluke, I believe."—" I fancy
" he

“ he is.”—“ You are a Mameluke,
 “ Sir ?”—“ Yes, Sir.”—“ He speaks
 “ French ! that’s delightful.”—“ Not
 “ delightful ; but natural enough, as
 “ you would speak the Turkish lan-
 “ guage if you had learned it.”—
 “ Turkish, that’s not possible ! Apro-
 “ pos, as a Turk, you ride on horse-
 “ back ?”—“ Sometimes.”—“ Ah !
 “ yes, I understand ; with your knees
 “ in an acute angle ; your heels—not
 “ pretty. The English manner of rid-
 “ ing is much better. I like that man-
 “ ner ! The English are the people
 “ for sitting a horse !”—“ And for
 “ tea !”—“ That reminds me, that
 “ you did not come to the route.”—
 “ Where, then ?”—“ Last night at
 “ Madame de Gemerci’s.”—“ Oh !
 “ don’t mention it ; I abominate large
 “ parties ; my lungs, my nerves.”—
 “ Inquiries were made for you.”—
 “ By whom ?”—“ By some one, by
 L 6 “ every

“ every one. A charming party ! such
 “ luxury ! such rooms ! a thousand
 “ wax-candles ! a hundred women ! ”
 —“ Handsome ones ? ” —“ Yes, hand-
 “ some—as they are. Men of the first
 “ fashion, Russians, admirable Rus-
 “ sians ! Such music ! such a supper !
 “ such a ball ! And all in such a
 “ style ! so divine ! so elegant ! ” —
 “ But was she not related to Melfort ? ”
 —(This was the name of the deceased)
 —“ A very near relation ; he was her
 “ father’s brother.” —“ She did not
 “ know then ” —“ Oh, yes ! she knew
 “ it last night, but she will pretend
 “ not to have heard of it till this
 “ morning. Could she foresee his
 “ death ? These hundred persons in-
 “ vited ! Think of that.” —“ Ah !
 “ indeed, no death could happen more
 “ unseasonably : I had promised little
 “ Linange to go this morning and try
 “ his horse, and here ” —“ Faith, in
 “ your

“ your place.”—“ Oh ! no : Melfort
 “ leaves a considerable sum of money
 “ to my father ; and propriety”—
 “ Did you take notice of the car-
 “ riage that just passed us ?”—
 “ Which ?”—“ It is little Aurelia.”—
 “ Indeed !”—“ Your family gets a
 “ considerable sum by the death of
 “ Melfort ; and she loses by it two
 “ hundred Louis a month.”—“ It is
 “ impolitic to meet his funeral.”—
 “ By no means ; for my part, I like
 “ that ; there’s some spirit in it : why
 “ not ? It is, perhaps, a piece of good
 “ fortune for her to lose that allow-
 “ ance.”—“ I thought so ; Melfort
 “ was not of a gay turn.”—“ A
 “ funeral procession affords not the
 “ fittest opportunity for relating anec-
 “ dotes ; but for that, I would tell
 “ you such things !”—“ Yes ; but
 “ grief.”—“ Do you intend to see the
 “ end of this ?”—“ Attend the pro-
 “ cession

“ cession to without the gates ? Are
 “ you dreaming ? Two hours in the
 “ open air ! A funeral sermon ! A
 “ man must be made of iron to en-
 “ dure all this. No : I have sent back
 “ my carriage ; I shall alight at the
 “ *Chaussée d’Antin*. Melfort has the
 “ complaisance to favour me with a
 “ conveyance ; I am on my way.”—
 O Giafar ! my countenance is still pale
 with fright ! ! ! Scarcely had he pro-
 nounced these words, before I saw him
 totter ; his head dropped on the shoul-
 der of his companion ; the colour for-
 sook his cheeks ; and his eyes closed.
 “ Sir,” exclaimed I, “ he’s ill !” I
 pulled the check-string ; the coach-
 man stopped his horses : the servants
 assisted us in getting him out of the
 carriage. We carried him into a neigh-
 bouring house ; a surgeon was sent
 for. The moment he arrived, “ It is
 “ too late,” said he, “ he has broken a
 “ vessel

“ vessel of his lungs : blood has choaked him ; he is dead ” — *I am on my way !* had he said. O my friend ! those words will never be effaced from my memory.

When they follow one of their friends or relations to his last asylum, they are all, in this manner, on their way ; and this, however, with more or less variation, is their general manner of following him ! The next day I was desirous to see what impression such an accident had made on the mind of his companion. I found him at his funeral : he recognized me. “ Ah ! I am very glad to see you again,” said he to me. “ Who would have expected such a thing ! What a scene ! It was frightful.” — “ Terrible ! and, above all, what a lesson ! ” — “ His relations are in despair : they wish to see you, and thank you for your attention ” — “ What attention ? I merely

“ merely discharged the duty of hu-
 “ manity. I wish I could, in the same
 “ manner, have restored that unfor-
 “ tunate youth to life !”—“ To life !
 “ say you, he deserved to live ; a
 “ graceful person, a handsome face ;
 “ he was rich too, played on the harp
 “ like an angel, and so fond of dancing !
 “ He danced better than I can. I
 “ shall long regret him ; on my ho-
 “ nour, I regret him. And as for
 “ understanding ! *I am on my way,*
 “ said he. Confess that it was a
 “ charming pun : I would give a hun-
 “ dred Louis that it had been uttered
 “ by another person : I should laugh
 “ at it all day.”

Yet this hare-brained youth, whom
 thou seest, as it were, ready to joke
 about the last moments of the man he
 loved, and whom thou dost already
 accuse of barbarous and cold indiffe-
 rence ; well ! this youth, wouldst thou
 believe

believe it ? he has the best heart, the most noble soul, the most tender feelings. This Dermance, his friend, had a child at nurse, the dear but unfortunate offspring of love, whom its father, suddenly taken off, left unprovided. Depienne, the hare-brained youth, who sees nothing but a pun in the last words of his dying friend, flies to this child, adopts it, and settles a handsome annuity on the mother ! This is little. Dermance had a sister by a former marriage of his father, whom he tenderly loved ; she was poor, and he had a thousand times declared that he would share his fortune with her. He dies without being able to realize his promise ; and the most profound distress was on the point of overwhelming this beautiful and virtuous young woman. Admire the conduct of Depienne. Yesterday he married her, and divided with her his fortune,

tune, which is likewise immense ! And when people mention to him this behaviour, no less noble than generous, the flighty and charming youth answers : “ Greek, like my furniture ! “ ’Tis the last will and testament of “ Eudamidas. What a fine subject “ for the drawing-room ! ” And he laughs. What a people then are the French, in whom the most gloomy ideas awaken nothing but a smile, and whose frivolous wit parodies the sublimest virtue, even when they exercise it with so much splendour ! Such, however, is the portrait of a Frenchman.

For a few years it might be said that all respect for the dead was totally effaced among them ; but such culpable insolence was not occasioned by that indifference which I have just mentioned : the latter belongs to their habitual fickleness ; the former was
the

the result of the times ; and, indeed, they soon have abandoned a line of conduct, which ought never to have been practised ; for if their mind is frivolous, their soul is great ; it cannot bend under institutions of a ferocious meanness. The fanaticism of licentiousness displaced every thing for a short period : on the same day, it dethroned gods and the dead. The apotheosis of the people was the show of the day : their statue was erected on all the public squares ; every where was seen the French Hercules ! And they had the indecency to make it of clay ! And what did they call the people ? A few accomplices, and not the people themselves ; and those were the persons who preached up equality. Equality ! that consolatory sentiment of all our troubles, which is fed only by the veneration which we feel for our fellow-creatures, lives only by the virtues
which

which we strive to imitate, teaches only compassion for the weaknesses and sufferings of human nature, doubles our enjoyments by rendering the happiness of others our own ; the indestructible tie by which God has been pleased to connect all mortals ; the inextinguishable flame the nature of which, if ever man should pretend to stifle it, would go and seek the spark at the extremities of every race, of those races, which having all proceeded from one common centre, have extended over the earth like so many radii, and, forcing them to fall back on themselves towards this primitive centre, would shew them the first circle formed by a family of brothers, and would ask them whether fraternal equality ought to have ceased, because the circle has increased. Ah ! do the circular waves occasioned by a stone thrown into a sheet of water lose their intenseness in

in proportion as they increase, and are those which reach a distant part of the shore less united than the first narrowing formed by the fall of the stone? And it was this indelible trace of the Divinity which a few maniacs were charged to proclaim : they intrusted to Hell the care of reviving the favours of Heaven. Alas ! profaners of that equality of which they affected to be the apostles, exterminators of all those liberal ideas of which true philosophy and true republics are composed, errors were their work for some months ! Fatal work ! imposing text ! of which so unfair an advantage has since been taken by other enemies. But, in short, Giafar, they pursued distinctions to the abode of sepulchral equality : they made funeral urns responsible for the dignity of their deposits. The Day descended, frightened, into the obscurity of the grave ; coffins were impi-
ously

ously driven about the streets like vile herds. Contempt for cold ashes engendered contempt for remains still warm : the coffin which had been interred a century, and the coffin of a day, met each other, and were both treated with equal dishonour. During the course of those deplorable days, man feared death only from the presentiment he had of the disgraceful manner in which his remains would be treated.

Glory be to the French ! Scarcely had the hour of tranquillity re-appeared, scarcely were they released from the execrable tyranny of a few sanguinary demagogues, before they revived the religious respect due to the grave. But the times were changed ; pomp ought also to have been changed ; and I say it with concern, Giafar, they thought of nothing but pomp : men of merit discussed this matter ; in my opinion,

opinion, they placed feeling too much in decorations; I could have wished that they had placed a little more feeling in persons. They did good by coming nearer to the ancients, by desiring that the last asylum of the dead should speak incessantly to the soul of the living by the melancholy of the site, by the eternal stillness of the environs, by the rigid simplicity of the architecture, by the mournful appearance of the trees, by the august uniformity of the tombs. I have read excellent writings on this subject; I have seen twenty plans of meritorious architects, and nothing has yet been done; the only thing that has engaged attention is the pomp of the first day. Thus, a respect for the dead has much less been considered than the pride of the living. People have made themselves uneasy about the journey; but is it rational to embellish the journey, and

and to leave the traveller without a retreat at the end of the road? The night which succeeds the day of this last journey will, however, be eternal. Prepare then a bed for the traveller, to-morrow he will not awake. What pains bestowed on an apartment which will be inhabited only for a few days! And not one stone yet for the palace the door of which will be guarded by eternity! But is this pomp really what it ought to be? The procession first repairs to the temple: be it so; this is dictated by the attachment which certain persons have for their religion. But for me, Giafar, thou knowest it, my sensibility too frequently clothes the spectacles to which I am witness with a colour that others would not see in them; as long as this dead person is under this sacred roof, my ardent imagination dissembles to me the insulting indifference which reigns around him;

him ; I fancy I see all the persons of the group prostrate before the Creator, conjuring him to take pity on the weaknesses of that brother from whom they have just been separated. Those religious canticles, the poetry of those words, the fear, the repentance, the confidence with which they are impressed, penetrate me, affect me, and soften me ; my deluded imagination lends to those pontiffs, to those Levites, to those numerous assistants, all the warmth of feeling, all the ardour of supplication, all the affecting energy of compassionate wishes ; but presently silence will extend to these wishes, to these prayers, to these intercessions. The question is to disarm a God : blind men ! by their account, there are no bounds to the anger of this God ; and, insolent wretches as they are, they have assigned limits to the prayers which are

to disarm him ; imbecile or barbarous beings, they have dared to compass time, in order to conjure the indulgence of him whom, they say, is a stranger to time for displaying his vengeance. Here man seems to say to him : “ Forgive if thou wilt : I have told only so many prayers : one more would soften thee perhaps ; what does it signify to me ? Punish : dost thou not see the word **END** at the bottom of this page ? ” O Giafar ! that unfortunate man who ceased to live, has had his praying account settled. What would he now do in this temple ? Does not the universal silence observed, announce that nothing is longer due to him ? He must needs pass the threshold of the door. Oh ! ’tis then that my heart is rent : it seems to me that I see him depart to appear before his Judge : is not that Judge seated on the brink of the distant grave ? Inhuman men !

men ! at that time you leave this unfortunate being alone ! Of what use to him is that vain luxury of carriages which follow in his procession ? Is he on that account less alone ? 'Tis the pomp of the dead, say they. Ah ! the pomp of the dead consists in the tears of the wretched : a hundred carriages are not worth ten poor persons. Remove those trophies of victories, those marks of dignities, those vain mockeries of the vanity of a day. Is there on earth a virtuous man by whom the deceased was loved ? Well ; let his hand rest on that coffin, and the coffin will be adorned. Let heralds march before the funeral bed, let them repeat aloud : This man reared his children in the path of virtue, he respected his father, he rendered his wife happy, he was an upright magistrate, he was merciful after battles, he was compassionate to the wretched, he was ge-

nerous to the indigent, he was tolerant to all men. He is no more ; the country has sustained a great loss. This is the pomp which suits the dead ! and if it be true that the eternal Judge is seated on the grave, refuse not to your brother this testimony of truth. Thus the pomp of the dead would be useful to the living : they would sometimes ask each other, “ If I were to “ die to-morrow, should I be worthy “ to traverse the streets in my coffin ? ” But they have employed their thoughts on coaches, hearses, hangings, incense, torches, inscriptions, and the boast of honouring the dead !

LETTER XIV.

I FREQUENTLY met at a friend's house two worthy persons ; the husband is a man about sixty years of age ; the wife is fifty. They had often loaded me with politeness, friendship even, and had a thousand times pressed me to go and see them. This invitation flattered me ; they made it with so much cordiality, that I at length resolved not to refuse any longer solicitations so obliging. One thing, however, astonished me ; they were perfectly well received at the house where I met them ; they were even treated there with much distinction ; nevertheless, it seemed to me that their *ton*, their manners, and their language, formed a singular contrast with the language, the manners, and the *ton* of the common friend at whose residence we

assembled : I found something particular, strange, and even unsuitable in this intimacy ; and I was at a loss to explain to myself the cause of it. The latter, a man likewise of a mature age, had formerly exercised high employments, lived a long time at court, and frequented the company of every person eminent for instruction, morals, or dignities in Paris : he had thence retained that amenity, that ease, and that exquisite politeness, which renders a Frenchman a being truly excellent when he possesses them ; and in him of whom I am speaking, these qualities, united to the best heart and the most noble soul, make a man the most worthy of respect, esteem and friendship. I certainly found in the other two the same inward virtues ; but their exterior was coarse : their good sense often struck me, but it was disfigured by their expressions. They were to-
tally

tally strangers to that refinement, that delicacy of attention, deference, and civility, which the other possesses in a supreme degree. There was, in my opinion, in the whole of their deportment, a sort of shade which contrasted disagreeably with the richness of their clothes, the number of their servants, and the elegance of their carriages : in short, they were the most worthy people in the world, but unfit for the sphere in which they lived. “ Explain
 “ to me this enigma,” said I one day to our common friend : “ how happens it that, with a fortune nearly
 “ equal, methinks, there is such a
 “ distance between you ? Is your ami-
 “ ableness a particular gift which Na-
 “ ture, less bountiful towards them,
 “ has withheld from them ? Excuse
 “ my frankness ; I see, unquestionably,
 “ that, as for sentiments of honour
 “ and probity, such society suits you

“ extremely well ! but if we take into
“ the question that knowledge of the
“ world of which the French appa-
“ rently lay so much stress, it is quite
“ another thing.”—“ A word will let
“ you into the secret,” answered he ;
“ they are modern rich persons. But
“ do not give to this epithet a false
“ explanation : how many new for-
“ tunes are not scandalous ! These
“ persons owe theirs to an irreproach-
“ able conduct ; it is the fruit of great
“ services rendered to the State, and
“ also of great services rendered to
“ private individuals. In this instance,
“ Fortune has wrought a miracle sel-
“ dom to be seen ; that is, in favour-
“ ing them, she has acted in con-
“ cert with virtue ; and it might be
“ said that these people have acquired,
“ with a noble disinterestedness, what
“ certain others have accumulated on-
“ ly by means the most shameful.
“ They

“ They have rendered to me the most
 “ signal services ; it was no more than
 “ just that my gratitude should be un-
 “ limited, and that, owing, like a
 “ thousand others, perhaps, to their
 “ vigilance the preservation of the
 “ greatest part of what I possess, I
 “ should contribute, for my share, to
 “ the increase of their comfort. We
 “ overlook, in so many people, riches
 “ obtained at the expence of the tears
 “ of the poor, that we may certainly
 “ overlook, in these worthy persons,
 “ a fortune secured by the gratitude
 “ of the obliged. Born of poor pa-
 “ rents, they were without education ;
 “ they carried on in their youth a very
 “ limited trade : but with regularity,
 “ honesty, and strict economy, they,
 “ in length of time, amassed a very
 “ considerable capital. For fourteen
 “ years past they have made the most
 “ worthy use of it, and they deserve

“ to prosper. Fortunately for them,
“ beneficence, this once, has not been
“ thrown away; they required nothing
“ from Gratitude, and Gratitude has
“ paid her debt. Their sole mean was
“ to have more judgment than policy.
“ They do not express themselves well,
“ I admit; they have a bluntness, an
“ absurd familiarity of manner, per-
“ haps; but ought all that to prevent
“ me from seeing them? To this
“ amiable exterior which you have the
“ goodness to distinguish in me, I
“ have the happiness, I own it, to
“ join an honest heart. But how many
“ people have that exterior without
“ having the essential qualities of those
“ of whom you are speaking! Yet
“ their company is frequented. If one
“ receives those who have a polish
“ without virtues, why not receive
“ those who have virtues without a
“ polish?”

I had

I had nothing to oppose to an explanation no less noble in him who gave it to me, than honourable to the friends who were the object of it, and I resolved to cultivate a still closer intimacy with the persons to whom I already granted so much esteem. I therefore availed myself of their invitation, and presented myself at their house. It was in the evening ; this is the hour when people here pay visits of ceremony ; a custom somewhat singular. Is it not because, having frequently to blush at their imprudent connexions, they have chosen that social duties of this sort should be enveloped in the shades of night ? Among the nations of antiquity, as well as among the moderns, I have constantly remarked that, when morals came to be corrupted, the meetings of society were always held in the evening : the excuse made for this is, that men are then

M 6

disen-

disengaged from all the business of the day. But the fact is otherwise: if duties are in question, it is because they postpone as long as they can any thing that is troublesome; if *fêtes*, sports, and pleasures are in question, it is because they would not be sorry, perhaps, that the world should be ignorant of the persons with whom they partake of them. Disengaged from the business of the day! Didst thou but know, Giafar, in what this business consists! How many people would make it their principal occupation to have none of this business!

I was announced. I found them *tête-a-tête*: they received me extremely well—"Why did you not come and dine with us? This is standing on ceremony. Do we act thus with our friends?" I was penetrated by so much benevolence, and I thought I saw them convinced that my heart,
much

much more my politeness, answered their friendly reception. Imperceptibly the conversation took a settled turn : they questioned me respecting Egypt, the Turks, the Mamelukes, my travels, and a thousand other things. It must be acknowledged that they were strangers even to notions the most common ; but the soundness of their judgment secured them from the ridicule attached to ignorance. The conversation was still kept up, when a young man came in : he was not announced. As he was without a hat, I judged that he belonged to the family, and rose up : he returned my salutation with the air of a protector. Scarcely did he give a nod to the master and mistress of the house. They addressed their discourse to him with extreme good-nature ; he answered them only by monosyllables. His dress appeared to me exceedingly studied. He drew
near

near to the fire, turned his back to us, warmed his feet, and rang the bell: a footman appeared. "Some wood," said he; and a few logs were brought. A newspaper happened to lie on the table: the young man took it up, and, leaning his elbow on the chimney, began to run it over. I knew not what to think of this tone of familiarity, not a little disdainful, and I was endeavouring in vain to divine who this young man could be. In the mean time the conversation continued, without his seeming to take any share in it. At a moment when the old man was explaining to me with much justness a question of trade, the youth, then doing us the honour to perceive our presence, interrupted me bluntly to say to me: "Sir, do the Mamelukes understand algebra?" I thought the interruption so unmannerly, and the question so unseasonable, that I could not

not forbear to reply with a little dryness : “ Yes, Sir, when they have
 “ learned it. Proceed, I beg,” added I, addressing myself to the old man.—
 “ Ah I pray drop the subject of trade,
 “ if you please,” rejoined the youth ;
 “ every one knows that ; the mathe-
 “ matical sciences, the agreeable arts,
 “ those are the things which it is of
 “ importance to know.”—“ You think
 “ so,” said I to him ; “ then industry,
 “ trade, agriculture, political econo-
 “ my, literature, eloquence, poetry.”
 —“ No, Sir, those are all amusements
 “ for children ; scholastic dreams. The
 “ physical and mathematical sciences,
 “ and the arts dependent on design,
 “ an equation and a picture, an alem-
 “ bic and an easel, oxygen and pen-
 “ cils, that is every thing which con-
 “ stitutes an age of glory.”—“ Yes,
 “ much in the same manner as the
 “ crescent constitutes the splendour
 “ of

“ of the full moon.”—“ Poetry is
 “ futility ; eloquence, turgidness ; his-
 “ tory, dotage ; travels, lies ; novels,
 “ folly. What is all that good for ?
 “ Does a state stand in need of such
 “ puerilities ? I give you my word,
 “ that if there existed at this day a
 “ man as eloquent as Bossuet, or as
 “ great a historian as Tacitus, and that
 “ he wanted one ounce of gold to se-
 “ cure him from wretchedness, I would
 “ not give it.”—“ Ah !” said the old
 gentleman, “ my son is a learned
 “ man !”—“ A little too much so !”
 added the mother, at the same time
 suppressing a sigh.—“ Ah ! Sir,” re-
 joined I, “ this young gentleman is
 “ your son. I should not have sus-
 “ pected it.” I saw by the peep which
 he took of himself in the glass, that
 he considered this as a compliment.
 Then turning round on his heel : “ Do
 “ you sup here, Sir ?” said he. The
 father

father and mother expressed, by their obliging manner, a wish that I would regard the question as an invitation. "I know not," said I, "whether I ought to accept the honour."—"The gentleman sups here," added the young man, interrupting me with an air of self-importance: "I will go and give orders." And he advanced towards the door. He was going to leave the room, when the father called out to him: "Peter, hark'ye then; with this gentleman's leave, send me my slippers, my gout teizes me a little." At this name of Peter, I saw him shrug up his shoulders with an air of pity, and he went away without making any answer. I had no occasion to see more, to guess that this young man was greatly humiliated at having such parents; and, at supper, I was completely convinced of it: he alone did the honours, he alone ruled
the

the conversation ; scarcely did he deign to help them, or permit them to speak : he seemed to dread their ignorance.

Yet I thought I remarked that his heart was not in league with his pride. A rather violent fit of coughing happened to seize the father, and the uneasiness of the son was manifested in a very feeling manner ; he rose from table to fly to his assistance, and this movement almost reconciled me to him. But the crisis being over, foppery resumed the ascendancy. However, with the exception of this folly and these prejudices, he did not want for amiableness : he spoke with tolerable grace, and was elegant in his manners ; what he knew, he knew well ; and he expressed himself with facility. He treated me with more politeness even than I had a right to expect from a man of such a description. He had at first disgusted me ; he ended by
inspir-

inspiring me with pity ; and I lamented to see that vanity had deteriorated a character born to be happy.

When I again met with the friend whose good sense had prepossessed me so much in favour of the worthy people at whose house I had spent the evening, I could not refrain from relating to him the scene which had occurred.—“ I am as well acquainted

“ with all this as you ;” said he : “ I

“ am sadly afraid that this young man

“ will cause them violent chagrin.—

“ He is not, however, an undutiful

“ son, but his error arises from the

“ vices of the times. No attention is

“ paid to this, and yet it may be at-

“ tended with results very fatal to so-

“ ciety. The alliance of wealth and

“ ignorance, when it serves as a tran-

“ sition to two ages different in go-

“ vernment and opinions, may have a

“ fatal influence on morals: such is

“ our

“ our present situation. Men whose
 “ education was neglected, desire, when
 “ they attain riches, that the educa-
 “ tion of their son should be brilliant :
 “ pride, more than paternal love, per-
 “ haps, decrees that this should be
 “ the case. It may, therefore, happen
 “ that children may become very well
 “ informed, while their parents remain
 “ very ignorant. Then, if consider-
 “ able pains are not taken to make
 “ these children distinguish clearly
 “ the respect which they owe to the
 “ inviolable rights of nature, from the
 “ contempt which the well-informed
 “ man is always inclined to feel for
 “ the man who knows nothing, it is
 “ to be apprehended that filial piety
 “ will be adulterated in them in pro-
 “ portion to the information they ac-
 “ quire ; it is to be apprehended that
 “ the pride of science may induce
 “ them to look down with pity on
 “ their

“ their ignorant parents, and that, this
 “ first step being taken, they may be-
 “ come undutiful sons. Whoever was
 “ an undutiful son is seldom a good
 “ father ; and if a man is neither a
 “ good son nor a good father, it is dif-
 “ ficult for him to be a good citizen.
 “ Must it thence be concluded, that a
 “ refined education ought to be refus-
 “ ed to the children of ignorant rich
 “ people ? Undoubtedly not : but it
 “ must be incessantly repeated to them,
 “ that it is a misfortune, and not an
 “ absurdity, to know nothing ; that it
 “ is as barbarous to laugh at the igno-
 “ rance of any one as to make a jest
 “ of a disorder by which he might be
 “ overwhelmed ; that the ignorant
 “ man must be treated with the most
 “ generous compassion, in order to
 “ soften for him the mortification of
 “ a useless life ; and that, if their pa-
 “ rents are unfortunately not well in-
 “ formed,

“ formed, they owe to them eternal
 “ gratitude for the use they make of
 “ their riches, for saving them from
 “ the condition to which they see
 “ themselves reduced; in short, one
 “ must remind them of the saying of
 “ a woman of Athens, whom her son,
 “ educated in the pride of the por-
 “ tico, had the meanness to reproach
 “ with ignorance. “ I have,” said
 she to him, “ known how to love
 “ you as a mother; if you know not
 “ how to respect me as a son, you are
 “ more ignorant than I am.”

At the beginning of the last centu-
 ry, at the time of Law's system, a fish-
 woman happened to make a considera-
 ble fortune. She had married a bra-
 zier. Having become rich, they quit-
 ted their trade; they had an infant
 son; they placed their money in a
 bank: this money accumulated, and at
 the expiration of six years, these peo-
 ple

ple were worth a million of livres. In consequence, they purchased a magnificent hotel, vast estates, several horses and carriages, and kept a sumptuous and refined table. Presently parasites flocked to them, flatterers abounded, and sly epigrams were produced in great number; for the master and mistress of the house had preserved of their former condition nothing but their coarse language, and had acquired nothing new but the affectation which renders it ridiculous; and parasites and flatterers too frequently make themselves amends for their mean civilities by caustic lampoons, a hundred times still meaner. The child was, above all, the object of general idolatry: to speak of him, to boast what he would be some day, to see him beforehand in the highest offices, to praise his understanding, his genius, his memory, his dispositions, and even his

his follies, such was the daily occupation of the courtiers. They well knew that, in this manner, they secured the good graces of the blind parents.

The family rolled in wealth ; consequently the boy had a great many masters : he knew to a tittle how many kings Assyria had had, how many Memphis, how many the Medes. He was taught to consider the Spartans as very rude, and the Athenians as very amiable ; he was told the name of Lycurgus, and the *virtues* of Aspasia ; he knew all the successors of Alexander, the Cæsars perfectly, Cincinnatus very little, and the God of the Universe not at all. Moreover, he became famous on the violin ; he learned to paint like Latour, and he danced like Dupré ; but he excelled particularly in making a bow ; no one gave a better turn to his head-dress, was a better judge of embroidery, discriminated more quickly
the

the various qualities of perfumes ; and, to crown so much merit, he spoke his mother-tongue with a rare perfection. And, indeed, how he shrugged up his shoulders, when his mother said by chance : “ *I laughs at that there ;*” or when his father said : “ *We was at the opera yesterday.*” He did not conceive that he could be the son of such people ; and the flatterers, who like the Persians are always in adoration before the rising sun, silyly joined him in turning his parents into derision. As he grew older, incense was redoubled, and pride increased a hundred-fold ; by degrees the father and mother durst no longer open their mouth without being warmly rebuked by Mimi (this was the name of the hopeful youth). From pedantry Mimi passed to rudeness, from rudeness to outrage ; and, at sixteen, by dint of being learned, he be-

became the scourge of his honest and worthy parents.

His father grieved, and his unhappy mother melted into tears. “ ’Tis your
 “ own fault,” said to them the only honest, rational, and enlightened man who was sincerely attached to them:
 “ you renounced your authority in
 “ order to increase the number of his
 “ flatterers : he treats you like a monarch : this was likely to happen.
 “ Every thing may be repaired, if you
 “ will pledge yourselves to me to execute all that I shall prescribe to you;
 “ and, above all, if you consent not
 “ to see your son till I have corrected him : he shall be corrected, depend
 “ on it.” They consented to every thing.

At the very instant this friend made every disposition necessary for ensuring the success of the project which he had in contemplation ; and the next day he
 began

began to carry it into execution. In the morning, he dispatched a note, requesting the young man to take the trouble of calling on him. Mimi promised to repair to his house ; but before he went out, he was desirous to see his mother : she ordered herself to be denied to him, and he was told that his mother and father had locked themselves in, to consult on business of importance. At these words *business of importance*, he smiled with pity, went out without uneasiness, and arrived at the residence of his friend.

“ What do you think,” said he in a flighty tone, “ of my father and mother who have locked themselves in to consult on business of importance? The good souls! but what is the matter with you? I find you have a grave and melancholy air.”—

“ My friend,” replied the Mentor, “ it is no longer time to deal in plea-

N 2

“ santry.

“ santry. Your parents were extreme-
 “ ly rich ; as an only son, you were
 “ to aspire to an immense fortune : a
 “ stroke of fate destroys so fair a pros-
 “ pect. I afflict you with regret ; but
 “ it would have been too severe a blow
 “ to your father and mother to inform
 “ you themselves of this dreadful news.
 “ I have undertaken to do it : an un-
 “ expected bankruptcy plunges them
 “ into real indigence.”—“ Are you
 “ jesting ?”—“ By no means.”—“ Do
 “ you know that what you tell me is
 “ not pleasant ?”—“ I am sensible of
 “ it : accustomed to great opulence
 “”—“ Oh ! faith, I am not very
 “ tenacious of riches ; it is not for
 “ myself that I regret them ; it is for
 “ those worthy people who know no-
 “ thing, and want money to exist.”—
 “ You are in the right, they are to be
 “ pitied.”—“ Tell me, do you think
 “ that I possess talents enough to pro-
 “ cure

“cure them a livelihood?”—“’Tis
 “well,” said the Mentor to himself,
 “the heart is good, the cure is cer-
 “tain.”—“Well, you make me no
 “answer.”—“To speak the truth,
 “never having been one of your ad-
 “mirers, I am too little acquainted
 “with your talents, to decide whether
 “you can make so noble a use of
 “them.”—“I will try. Come, I will
 “return home to console them: their
 “knowledge is so confined, that they
 “will not have philosophy enough to
 “support this reverse of fortune.”

Such a mixture of good-nature and
 presumption had well nigh made the
 Mentor burst out a laughing.—“No;
 “stay here,” said he, “they must be
 “gone by this time. We must yield
 “to the storm; you shall take up your
 “abode here.”—“Be it so. Now
 “let us see in what manner I shall
 “make my *début*. I am an excellent

“ musician ; I have a mind to associ-
 “ ate myself to some virtuoso ; I shall
 “ set all Paris mad ; and gold will
 “ shower in on me from all quarters.”
 —“ Very well ; here’s the address of
 “ a great master.”—“ Give it to me ;
 “ I will go and call on him.”

He set out, arrived at the house, and
 presented himself. “ Sir, I am come
 “ to pay my respects to you. Although
 “ young, I am a great musician, and
 “ can play capitally on the violin. I
 “ want to turn my talents to account.
 “ I should be very glad if you would
 “ take me under your protection, and
 “ make me known to the public.”—
 “ With all my heart : be seated ; we
 “ will try something.” Music and
 desks were brought, together with vio-
 lins : they tuned their instruments,
 and began. Mimi played out of tune,
 missed all the notes, and protracted
 or hastened the time. “ You know
 “ nothing,”

“ nothing,” said the master to him ;
 “ practise yet eight or ten hours a day,
 “ and in five or six years you will make
 “ some proficiency.”—“ That is sin-
 “ gular ! all those who dined at our
 “ house said that I played in a capital
 “ style.”—“ They were in jest.” At
 that moment entered an elderly wo-
 man, clad like one of the humble class.
 The musician got up, advanced with
 respect, and presented a chair to her.
 “ *Thank ye,*” said she, “ *I ban’t tired.*”
 —“ Who is that woman ?” said Mimi.
 —“ ’Tis my mother.”—“ No doubt,
 “ she has some great talent.”—“ None
 “ at all.”—“ But from the tone of re-
 “ spect which you have just assumed
 “”—“ Did I not tell you that
 “ she was my mother ?” Mimi took
 his leave, saying to himself : “ A great
 “ artist respects his mother who says :
 “ *I ban’t tired ! ’tis very singular !*”

In the evening he was thoughtful.

“ My friend,” said he to the Mentor,
 “ I think I am a better painter than a
 “ musician, and that I shall be more
 “ successful in the art of painting.”—
 “ Be it so. Here’s the address of a
 “ celebrated painter.”

The next day Mimi presented himself at the residence of this artist. “ You
 “ possess a great talent,” said the
 painter to him : “ you must prove it
 “ to me ; step into my study. Here’s
 “ an easel, canvas, and pencils ; choose
 “ a subject and go to work.” Mimi
 worked for several days from day-break
 to sun-set, and, according to the painter’s report, produced the finest *daub*
 that had been seen in Paris for fifty
 years. He fancied that he had eclipsed
 Corregio.—“ That is detestable,” said
 the painter to him.—“ How detest-
 “ able ? and a hundred connoisseurs
 “ who came to our house, while they
 “ drank coffee, fell into raptures at
 “ my

“ my roughest sketches.”—“ They
 “ were laughing : you know not even
 “ the principles of the art.” Mimi, a
 little confused, was listening to this
 rebuke, when an old man, seated near
 the stove, raised his voice, and said to
 the painter : “ Hark’ye, Jacquau,
 “ leave those matters for a moment,
 “ and come and help me to get on my
 “ legs.” The painter eagerly ran, and
 in his haste, overset a fine picture
 which he had just finished ; but, with-
 out concerning himself about this ac-
 cident, he flew to the old man, sup-
 ported him, and, in an affectionate
 manner, led him into an adjoining
 room, whither he wished to be con-
 ducted. When the artist returned :
 “ That is surely,” said Mimi to him,
 “ some celebrated painter in the win-
 “ ter of age whom you have just treat-
 “ ed with so much deference ?”—
 “ Not at all ; ’tis my father, a wor-
 N 5 “ thy

“ thy and honest vine-dresser, who
 “ does me the favour to live with me.”
 —“ But you have thrown down your
 “ picture, and have not set it up again.”
 —“ My father was waiting.”—“ Well!
 “ though he had waited a minute :
 “ you see, this picture is spoiled.”—
 “ I can paint a hundred pictures ; but
 “ how ever replace a minute that I
 “ had lost in not pleasing my father !”

Mimi went away, saying to himself:
 “ What ! a famous artist that is not
 “ ashamed of his father being a vine-
 “ dresser, who calls him Jacquau ! this
 “ is very extraordinary !” Every day
 he became more thoughtful. “ Well !
 “ how do you succeed with your music
 “ and painting ?” said the Mentor to
 him.—“ Those arts are ungrateful,”
 replied Mimi : “ I prefer professing
 “ history : I shall immediately have
 “ pupils, and I shall sooner be able to
 “ assist my—my worthy mother.”—

“ His

“ His worthy mother,” said the Mentor to himself, “ the epithet is new. “ The remedy operates. So much the “ better :” “ You intend then to profess history. Here is a letter of recommendation for a celebrated man “ of learning.”

Mimi presented himself at the abode of this man of learning, who made him undergo an hour’s examination. “ You cannot be a professor,” said to him, at last, this able man ; “ you “ neither know the elements of history, nor the order of times, nor “ the succession of empires, nor the “ revolutions which they have experienced, nor dynasties, nor dates.” — “ But, my God ! how does this happen ? all those who supped at my “ mother’s took me for umpire.” — “ They were certainly jeering. Believe “ me, my good friend, a man must “ give himself up to long studies be-

“ fore he ventures to expose himself
 “ to appear in public. I am fifty years
 “ old : I am sure of my method ; every
 “ day I have four hundred auditors,
 “ who seem to listen to me with kind-
 “ ness : yet I never mount the rostrum
 “ but in trembling. This is the hour
 “ at which I deliver my lectures ; fol-
 “ low me, you shall witness the timi-
 “ dity with which a just modesty in-
 “ spires every man of information.”

On going out, they met on the stairs
 a good honest-looking countrywoman.
 The learned man, uttering an excla-
 mation of joy, rushed into her arms.
 “ Good morning, mother ! my dear
 “ mother ! why, in such bad weather,
 “ do you expose yourself in order to
 “ come and see me ? ” — “ Faith, my
 “ son, *I be come* to dine with you.” —
 “ Excuse me, Sir, I shall not go out :
 “ here’s my mother, a good honest
 “ gardener of Montmorency ; I shall
 “ not

“ not leave my mother, my worthy
 “ mother, whom I see but once a
 “ week.”—“ And your four hundred
 “ auditors ?”—“ I shall take measures
 “ for apprizing them. They will ap-
 “ prove of my conduct : the example
 “ of filial love is of more consequence
 “ than a lesson of history.” Mimi
 took leave, saying to himself : “ A man
 “ of learning renowned throughout
 “ Europe, embraces his mother who
 “ says, *I be come*. This is incredible.”

Every day the same trial, every day
 the same disappointment ; and every
 day also the same display of the senti-
 ments which we owe to Nature. By
 degrees Mimi became dull and melan-
 choly ; his health was affected, the
 bloom of his complexion had disap-
 peared ; he no longer ate, nor slept.
 “ The experiment is harsh,” said the
 Mentor ; “ but the cure draws nigh.”
 One evening the youth, on his return
 home,

home, was bathed in tears. “ My
 “ friend, what’s the matter with you ? ”
 said the Mentor. — “ My eyes are
 “ opened,” said he ; “ I am a mon-
 “ ster.” — “ But what has happened
 “ then ? Let us chat together ; open
 “ your heart to me.” — “ What shall
 “ I say to you ! When I recollect the
 “ attention, consideration, and respect
 “ with which I have seen so many
 “ celebrated men penetrated for the
 “ authors of their days, and compare
 “ their conduct to the insolent man-
 “ ner in which I, an ignorant wretch,
 “ treated my worthy parents, I detest
 “ myself. But a recent circumstance
 “ has just overwhelmed me, a recent
 “ lesson has just broken my heart.”
 — “ How ! explain yourself.” — “ Shall
 “ I be able ! Listen to me. For a
 “ long time past you must have ob-
 “ served the disorder of my mind ;
 “ this evening, not knowing where to
 “ drag

“ drag that tædium, that melancholy,
 “ shall I say it ? that remorse to which
 “ I am a prey, I wandered without
 “ design, without will, without me-
 “ mory. The *Thuilleries* were open.
 “ Guided by chance, I entered : it was
 “ already dark. Inauspicious darkness
 “ and gloomy silence reigned in the
 “ windings of this spacious garden.
 “ The solitude was profound, nothing
 “ was heard, nothing but the agita-
 “ tion of the air at certain intervals :
 “ this solitude added to my sadness, and
 “ yet was not unpleasing. ‘ What,’
 “ said I to myself, ‘ shall I meet with
 “ no happy lover ? A solitude, and
 “ no lovers ! Love then no longer
 “ exists in nature !’ I walked on : by
 “ degrees I arrived near the iron gate
 “ which opens into the *Champs Elysées*.
 “ All at once I heard a slight move-
 “ ment. I stopped, I listened, I
 “ looked : by the feeble glimmer of
 “ the

“ the twilight, I thought I perceived
“ some one seated on a bench, outside
“ of the gate. I approached softly.
“ The whistling of the wind concealed
“ the noise of my steps, and I was
“ not heard. It was a man, whose
“ hair was white with age. At this
“ hour, in such bad weather, what
“ does he here ?” I said to myself.
“ When one is solitary, pity is not
“ far from us : I listened again : no
“ complaint, nothing that manifested
“ impatience. But it was an old man,
“ and my heart was oppressed : what
“ is he caressing then ? Ah ! ’tis a
“ little dog : a dog is the companion
“ of misfortune. All of a sudden the
“ dog advanced twenty paces, with his
“ ears erect, and his eye watchful ; he
“ stopped, looked about, and then re-
“ turned more slowly. He licked the
“ old man’s hand, seated himself
“ between his legs, with his neck
“ stretched

“ stretched and his look directed to a
 “ distance ; from time to time he
 “ turned his head back, and seemed
 “ to say to his master : He comes
 “ not ! I must confess that, whether
 “ from that curiosity natural to man,
 “ or from obedience to that respect
 “ for old age, natural to every heart,
 “ I was unable to quit the spot ; and
 “ then, in this retired place, far from
 “ any habitation, in a dark evening,
 “ at such an hour, might not this old
 “ man be insulted, ill-treated, or what
 “ not ? I will be at hand at least ; I
 “ may fly to his assistance. But the
 “ faithful dog saw something ; and he
 “ sprang forward like lightning, and
 “ I heard the old man say, in a low
 “ voice, ’Tis he ! Astonishing effect
 “ of flattering prepossessions which,
 “ in spite of ourselves seduce us, in
 “ favour of persons unknown ! This
 “ ’tis he relieved me from an incon-
 “ ceivable

“ ceivable weight : it seemed to me
 “ that it was myself whom this ap-
 “ pointment concerned, and that this
 “ ’tis *he*, announced to me the pre-
 “ sence of a friend. An instant after
 “ the dog re-appeared, running, jump-
 “ ing, coming back, and yet not bark-
 “ ing. Dogs then are also acquainted
 “ with mystery ? A young man ap-
 “ peared ; he was in a waistcoat, with-
 “ out a coat, and carried something
 “ under his arm. I thought I remark-
 “ ed in him a sort of elegance.—
 “ There you are !’ said the old man to
 “ him with mildness.—‘ Forgive me,
 “ father ! you have been waiting a
 “ long time,’ answered the young
 “ man.—‘ Not very long ; an hour at
 “ most.’—‘ An hour, ah ! my God !
 “ ’tis too long, a great deal too long ;
 “ but I could not come sooner.’—
 “ Make yourself easy then, my son ;
 “ do I reproach you ?’—‘ Ah ! you
 “ are

“ are so good, my poor father, that
 “ you never do reproach me. But
 “ are you not hungry ?”—‘ No : I
 “ dined with what you brought me
 “ yesterday.’—‘ Hold, here.....Ex-
 “ cuse it, I wrapped it up as well as I
 “ was able’... — ‘ Charles, this is
 “ half as much again as I want.’—‘ I
 “ shall be angry, do you see ! I would
 “ lay a wager that you have de-
 “ prived yourself’—‘ No : my God,
 “ no, no.’—‘ Do not tell an untruth,
 “ even in doing a good action : you
 “ have eaten nothing but bread, I see.’
 “ — ‘ Well ! is not that enough ?’—
 “ ‘ When one works ! do you think of
 “ such a thing ? You will be the cause
 “ of my coming no more.’ ‘ Ah ! fa-
 “ ther !’—‘ My worthy boy ! Alas !
 “ I had not brought thee up for that
 “ trade.’—‘ I am fond of it ; I
 “ support my father ! What more
 “ do I want ? But the evenings will
 “ become

“ become long ; I will not have
 “ you wait for me here. See, it has
 “ been raining ; you are wet, I will
 “ carry what you want every even-
 “ ing to your lodging.’—‘ Don’t
 “ think of it : what, to the farther
 “ end of the town ? tired as you must
 “ be, after having been at work all
 “ day ! Alas ! If I had a little mo-
 “ ney, I would move nearer to you.’
 “ —‘ There’s a Louis which I have
 “ saved : will that be sufficient for
 “ you ?’—‘ My son, I shall never be
 “ in a condition to return it to you.’
 “ And I heard the old man sob.—‘ Oh !
 “ don’t grieve me in this manner, fa-
 “ ther ! You will move nearer to me ;
 “ is not that paying me ? But what !
 “ already half past nine o’clock ! how
 “ time slips away !’—‘ Come, good-
 “ night, my son.’—‘ We will see
 “ each other again to-morrow, father.
 “ But come no more to this place.
 “ That

“ That would make me uneasy. I will
 “ go to your lodging.’—‘ Do not fa-
 “ tigue yourself to no purpose. To-
 “ morrow I shall want nothing.’—
 “ ‘Want nothing ! You will not then
 “ want to see me ? You deceive me,
 “ father, in your turn.’—‘ My dear
 “ and worthy boy !’ and he pressed
 “ him to his bosom. ‘Come, go home.’
 “ —‘ Home !’—‘ Yes.’—‘ Without
 “ your blessing ?’ And the young
 “ man fell on his knees.—‘ O God of
 “ the universe ! If thou deignest to
 “ bestow thy favours on respectful
 “ children, shower down thy blessings
 “ on the head of my son.’—At these
 “ words he embraced him ; they walked
 “ together a little distance, and went
 “ away, when the darkness concealed
 “ them from my sight. And I, a cri-
 “ minal, shameful, and afflicted son,
 “ I have fled from that spot which
 “ filial piety had just rendered sacred !
 “ Take

“ Take pity on my sufferings ; I must
 “ repair my crime or expire with grief.
 “ Conduct me, send me to my parents :
 “ I am young, I am strong, I will work
 “ to support them, to comfort their
 “ old age, to efface the mortification
 “ which I have caused them. They
 “ will forgive me—my crime arose
 “ from flatterers !”

“ This resolution is worthy of you,”
 said the Mentor, at the same time embracing him : “ let us delay it no longer,
 “ but set out instantly.” A carriage
 was sent for, and they got into it. “ I
 “ have some orders to give before our
 “ departure,” said the Mentor, stopping the carriage at the gate of a hotel :
 “ be so good as to follow me for a moment.” The young man, afflicted,
 and absorbed in reflection, took no notice, and obeyed. They crossed the court, ascended the stair-case, and entered the apartments. At length the
 Mentor,

Mentor, opening a door, exclaimed :
 “ Happy mother, congratulate your-
 “ self : I bring you back a dutiful, re-
 “ spectful son, a son worthy of you !”
 Mimi raised his eyes, saw his father
 and mother : he thought he was dream-
 ing : he found them in the same hotel
 where he had left them. He uttered
 an exclamation, sprang forward, and
 threw himself at their feet : “ Do you
 “ forgive me ?” said he to them. They
 embraced him, caressed him, and raised
 him up : tears of sensibility flowed
 from every eye. Confused, ashamed,
 and yet delighted, he abandoned him-
 self to all the transports of his joy, hap-
 piness, and repentance. “ Ah ! ’tis
 “ to you that I owe every thing,” said
 he to the Mentor. “ I perceive the
 “ kind imposture which you have prac-
 “ tised on me.”—“ I spoke only to
 “ your heart,” replied the Mentor ;
 “ you are indebted to me only for
 “ having

“ having found means to judge of it.
 “ The fortune of your parents is en-
 “ tire, and now your sentiments ren-
 “ der you worthy to share it. The
 “ talents which you imagined you pos-
 “ sessed, you possess in reality; it
 “ was by my desire that the persons
 “ to whom I addressed you, pretended
 “ not to discover them in you. It was
 “ necessary to teach you to be sensible
 “ of what does honour to those talents;
 “ that is to say, to impart to you that
 “ modesty which sets them off, which
 “ we ought to have in presence of
 “ mankind, and which ought to be
 “ converted into respect when it is ex-
 “ pedient to exercise it towards those
 “ who have given us birth. Never
 “ forget that the august characteristic
 “ of paternity is the guarantee of the
 “ eternal alliance which God has deign-
 “ ed to make with man.”

Mimi deceived not the hope of his
 bene-

benefactor : he was the best informed man of his time, the most worthy citizen, and the best of sons.

“ Such is, my dear Gesid,” continued the friend at whose house I was, “ the history of my grandfather. A “ similar lesson would not, perhaps, “ be useless to the young man of whom “ we were speaking just now, and it “ would be applicable to many others.”



NOTES.

Page 12.—The Theatre du Vaudeville at Paris is the first of the small *theatres*, and much frequented. There is little acting, but much singing. It parodies operas, tragedies, and comedies, of the grand theatres; and changes into a drama, or a farce, anecdotes of great literary, military, or other eminent characters, or any thing temporary that occurs in France either curious, ridiculous, original, or contemptible. What makes the fortune of this theatre, is its continual gaiety, and the popular and fashionable airs and tunes always intermixed with the acting. Lately, the ridiculous literary quarrel between Madame Genlis and Madame Stael was exhibited at this theatre; and both the ladies, their moral and revolutionary conduct, and their political and religious principles and pretensions, exposed to laughter.

Page 13.—Two of the most popular pieces at the Theatre du Vaudeville are, *Le Philosophe de Ferney*, and *Guillaume*, representing Voltaire and Malesherbes doing acts of generosity, which are

so much the more applauded when represented upon the stage, as they are seldom, if ever, heard of in the society of the citizens in republican France.

Page 15.—Abbé Sieyes has truly said, that the ambition and pretensions for places, and not the love of liberty, have caused all the revolutionary changes brought about by different factions, and changed the several constitutions for these last fourteen years. The maximum of French patriotism is, according to the Abbé, explained in these words: “*Ote toi que je prend ta place.*” There are a number of persons in France who, in a short time, have made the whole tour of the circle of ambition; who started twelve years ago as tailors, barbers, or shoe-blacks; became generals, legislators, or ministers; and are now returned from the field, the forum, and the cabinet, to their former shops or stalls, not from philosophy, but from necessity; succeeded by other tailors, barbers, or shoe-blacks, more fortunate, or more cunning.

Page 17.—All the schemes or projects of the inventive French genius presented to former kings or ministers, and preserved in the French archives, the different republican governments have more or less made use of. The project of conquering Egypt was presented to Louis XIV. but laid dormant, until the Directory and Buonaparte put in-
to

to execution what, for upwards of a century, was regarded as unjust and impolitic, if not impracticable. Near two centuries ago, it was proposed to Cardinal Richelieu to extend the frontiers of the French monarchy to the Rhine, as it has lately been done by the French republic: a power which respected nothing either sacred or respectable, assisted by fortune, has made those political schemes successful. But others, particularly those concerning financial operations, have caused the ruin of millions, and cause yet the sufferings of thousands of families. The plan of invading England with gun-boats was presented to the Duke of Choiseul, during the Seven Years' War; but though at that period the French navy was not much inferior to the English, it was laid aside as impracticable.

Page 20.—By the Revolution, selfishness, or, as the French call it, egotism, is become the prevalent passion of a French citizen. Fathers have caused their sons, who demanded the inheritance of their mothers, to be shot or transported as emigrants; and sons and daughters have denounced their parents, and sent them to the scaffold as aristocrats or royalists, to get possession of their property. Dubois Creancé commanded the execution of one of his sons; and young La Tour de Brisy discovered to Chartier the correspondence

of his parents with the royalists in La Vendée, and was present at their execution. Mallet du Pan said, justly, that such is the egotism of a French citizen, that if he wanted fire to boil an egg, he would without any hesitation burn his best friend's house, could it be boiled no otherwise. That, with this addition, they are yet what their countryman Voltaire called them, *singe-stigres*, the bloody scenes of the Revolution prove beyond a contradiction.

Page 32.—It is a fact, that the French critics and reviewers are more governed by faction than by justice, and that impartiality is out of the question. Chenier is, no doubt, the person the Author means; whose Tragedy of Tiberius Gracchus was hissed off the stage in the autumn of 1800, by the judicious, though violent critique of Geoffroi, in his Feuilleton of the Journal des Debats, where he exposed and attacked the crimes of the *regicide* and *fratricide* Chenier, more than he criticised the work of the author Chenier.

This Chenier voted in the National Convention for the death of his King in 1793; and caused his own brother André to be guillotined in 1794; and is therefore commonly called Cain Chenier. He has obtained lately from Buonaparte a place, as Inspector over the French
Public

Public Education, worth 40,000 livres a-year.—Geoffroi is regarded as the first French critic of the present age; and he is become a literary oracle and favourite with the fair sex. His remarks on the Theatres entertain, please, and *instruct* so much the frivolous French nation, that the sale of the *Journal des Debats* is greater even than that of the *Moniteur*; and amounts to upwards of 16,000 *daily* copies. The subscribers are 12,000.

Page 66.—The education in France since the Revolution has been such, that, from 1792 to 1800, transportation was the punishment of any school-master or school-mistress, who dared to instruct their pupils in the principles of the Christian religion, to accustom them to pray to our Saviour, or permit them to go to church on a Sunday. The day of the decade was the feast of the republicans, when children were carried to the temple of the Theophilanthropes, to hear deistical or atheistical discourses. Those who do not adore or acknowledge a Divinity, can therefore be little expected to reverence their parents, by shewing them any real affection. Ceremony has taken the place of duty, indifference has excluded gratitude, and vanity has silenced nature.—The famous actress, Mademoiselle Raucour—the French Siddons as to talents—sent her father regularly at her benefit, a bouquet worth ten Louis.—In

1798,

1798, the old man threw himself from a four-pair-of-stairs window and killed himself on the spot. In his pocket was found a letter from his loving daughter, which, report said, contained the refusal of a Louis d'or, though her father's neighbours had certified, that for forty-eight hours he had not money to buy a pound of bread. The revenue of Mademoiselle Raucour is calculated to be upwards of 30,000 livres.

Page 137.—During the reign of Louis XV. the Jansenists paid some hypocrites, or prepared some fanatics, to exhibit convulsions, and to prove the sanctity and the miracles of St. Medar, a deceased counsellor of Parliament, and an enthusiastic Jansenist, by falling into fits as soon as they laid down upon his grave. This superstitious farce caused such a crowd, and so many scandalous scenes in the church-yard of the Innocents, that the police caused it to be shut up. The next day, the following lines were painted over the principal entry:

De par le Roi, defence a Dieu
De faire miracles en ces lieux.

Page 154.—This prejudice against the comedians in France during the Monarchy, was certainly illiberal, if not unjust; but, in the annals of the cruel and barbarous of all revolutions, are found the names of more actors who have committed

mitted or commanded atrocious deeds, than can be hardly credible, were it not notorious. Collot d'Herbois, as a member of the Convention, caused several thousand Lyonese people to be guillotined or shot, because, when an actor at Lyons, he had been hissed upon the stage. Ferni, another actor, was one of the judges of the Revolutionary Tribunals at Lyons and Orange, which condemned so many thousand innocent persons to death. Fusil, another actor and revolutionary judge; Dugazon, an actor, and colonel in the Revolutionary Army, which arrested, plundered and murdered every where in France during the reign of Robespierre; Monvel, an actor and a man of letters, was the high priest of the Goddess of Reason, and as such, ascended the pulpit and preached in the church of St. Roch at Paris. Hundreds of others have figured in the revolutionary committees, and in the massacres of prisoners. The conduct of these persons certainly justified former governments to suspect the morality, and to restrain the influence in society of this class of men in France.

Page 234.—Since France is a republic, and until the religious concordat permitted religious ceremonies, an equality of indecency was established in all burials, as shocking as disgusting. The republican tyranny which had oppressed and enslaved

slaved the French citizens when alive, followed them when corpses even to the grave. The corpses of Louis XVI., his queen, son, and sister, were thrown into a pit in the church-yard of St. Magdelaine, without coffin, with all other victims to the tyranny of Robespierre and of the regicide National Convention, and were only covered with lime. All persons, who did not expire on the scaffold, in prison, or in hospitals, were, without exception, when dead, shut up in a clumsy coffin, or rather box, and within twenty-four hours after their death carried to the burial place, in the suburbs, by four men, who covered their coffins with a three-coloured cloth. These men had their regular places, some public-houses, where they rested and went to drink, leaving their burthen in the street, often for hours, exposed to the insulting curiosity of the idle or unfeeling, or to the voracious appetite of starved dogs or hogs. When arrived at the place of burial, the coffin was let down with ropes into a large pit, and deposited upon other coffins, over which, and between each, was thrown some lime. These pits generally were deep and large enough for several thousand coffins, and therefore remained open for years, until they could contain no more corpses. No clergyman accompanied, or was permitted to read prayers over, the dead. A certain
number

number of men belonged to each district and section, four of whom carried all persons, without any distinction, in the same manner to their last abode. All mourners, mourning dresses, and mourning processions, were prohibited or proscribed by the republican laws.

Even so late as the spring of 1802, the corpses of all persons who died in the hospitals, or in the prisons, were thrown naked into a cart, which at ten o'clock every night attended for that purpose, to carry them to the pits dug for their reception, all situated in the suburbs, not very distant from houses and habitations. One of them, nearly opposite the King's garden, called now *Jardin des Plantes*, contained in May, 1802, upwards of seven thousand corpses. The whole expence of such a burial, the coffin included, amounted to sixteen livres, or thirteen shillings and sixpence.

Page 256.—In France, and in other countries upon the continent, it is not the custom, as in England, to present or introduce strangers by their names or titles, the first time they meet with each other in company at some common friend's or acquaintance's. If they hear the name of a person present, who is known to be eminent either for talents or virtues, or if they are pleased with the conversation or manners of an individual of the society, the etiquette is

desire the master of the house to recommend a better acquaintance, by separately presenting them, which he never refuses, if he thinks it mutually proper, and judges it to be useful or agreeable to both parties.



END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

{ by B. M'Millan, }
{ at, Covent-Garden. }

